

A person with short brown hair, wearing a pink and white striped shirt and light blue shorts, is riding a bicycle away from the camera on a dirt path. The path is surrounded by lush green trees and tall grass. Sunlight filters through the leaves, creating a warm, golden glow. A red circular graphic is in the top left corner, containing the text 'the simple things' and 'July'. In the top right, the text 'TAKING TIME TO LIVE WELL' is written in white. To the right of the cyclist, the text 'Everyday adventures' is in bold, followed by 'Take an outing by bus', 'Flea market foraging', and 'Don't forget your Thermos!'. At the bottom, the word 'JOURNEY' is in large white letters, and a list of activities is at the very bottom.

the simple things

July

TAKING TIME TO LIVE WELL

Everyday adventures

Take an outing by bus

Flea market foraging

Don't forget your Thermos!

JOURNEY

*Dreaming of a beach house • Cool stamp collecting • Girl pirates
Jerk pulled pork & Caribbean black cake • Books to make you think
Nature's power to calm • Seashells & lavender • Summer in Reykjavík*

A woman with long blonde hair is sitting on a wooden pier, drinking from a blue cup. She is wearing a blue long-sleeved sweater and tan overalls. The background shows a blue sky with white clouds and a body of water with a red buoy.

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Let's take a journey together.
Where the **lavender** hums with bees
and we can gather **seashells**. Where
there is **street food** for the soul;
empanadas, **sweet drinks** from
Persia and fruity Caribbean **barbecue**.
We'll learn to **dive** and **play croquet**
properly. We'll jump on a bike or take a
bus, packing a **good read** for the
open road. Then we'll head home to **eat**
cake and **pod peas**. Because journeys
can be big or small, real or of the mind.
They are about the moment, about
The Simple Things.



the simple things

July



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FRESH

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TWITTER.COM/SIMPLETHINGSMAG



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A very simple story no.9

The best thing about travelling is the unexpected pleasure. See me here, cycling through the gorse on a sunny summer weekend in north Norfolk. To my right, the salt marshes and beyond, the sea. In my panniers: treasure. We thought we were on a bike ride but it turned out to be a journey of discovery when we found a second-hand book sale at a village hall. We filled our bags with little gems, holed up in a sandy clearing and read away the afternoon. You've got to love an everyday adventure.

Lisa

EDITOR **LISA SYKES**
#mysimplething



MEET THE TEAM



JENNY LINFORD

Jenny, a food writer, profiles street food queen Petra Barran on page 32. She is the author of *Food Lovers' London*, *The Creamery Kitchen* and *The Tomato Basket*.

What journey are you looking forward to this summer?

Going to North Cornwall for body-boarding and cliff top walks.



RUTH TIERNEY

Ruth runs Etsy art shop LittleBirdLewis (www.etsy.com/uk/shop) and regularly visits French flea markets. She writes about her adventures at *brocantes* on page 73.

What journey are you looking forward to this summer?

A week in Stockholm, Sweden, where I'm hoping to find some vintage treasures while island hopping.



EMMA FARRARONS

French illustrator Emma is the author of the best-selling *The Mindfulness Colouring Book* and she designed the colouring cards for our June issue. See how other designers have interpreted her patterns on page 78.

What journey are you looking forward to this summer?

Motherhood!



KATHARINE DAVIES

Dorset-based photographer Katharine shoots the Chalkboard images for our back cover every month. This month we've made some of our favourites into beautiful postcards for subscribers.

What journey are you looking forward to this summer?

A dusky evening picnic on the beach while camping with friends, night lights twinkling.



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FRESH

THE SIMPLE THINGS TO BUY, COOK, READ AND DO IN JULY



Empanadillas

These Paraguayan mini empanadas are an instant crowd pleaser. Add a pile of paper napkins, some cold beers and a few bottles of Tabasco and you're all set for a fun, faff-free evening with friends. Turn to page 128 for the recipe.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN CATHCART. TAKEN FROM PARTY-PERFECT BITES BY MILLI TAYLOR (RYLAND PETERS & SMALL, £16.99)



Hello Sunshine cushion | £8

A blast of primrose-coloured cheerfulness to brighten any cloudy morning. www.tesco.com/direct

Enamelware | from £14.95

Robust and retro kitchenalia for kitchens and campers. www.minimoderns.com



Maui deckchair | £50

A restful blue canvas to encourage contented slumbering in the sun. www.habitat.co.uk

THINGS TO WANT AND WISH FOR

Covetable things for the home to take with you on life's colourful journey, sourced by LOUISE GORROD



LOUISE GORROD

The Simple Things' wishlist editor Louise is a Hove-based writer, baker, photographer and author of blog Buttercup Days www.buttercupdaysuk.blogspot.co.uk. See more of her things to want and wish for at www.pinterest.com/simplethings



Salt-water sandals | £55

Retro-style sandals which, as the name suggests, are quite happy being paddled in the sea. www.toa.st/uk



Glacier ice bucket | £49.95

To keep drinks stylishly chilled. Very cool. www.amazon.co.uk

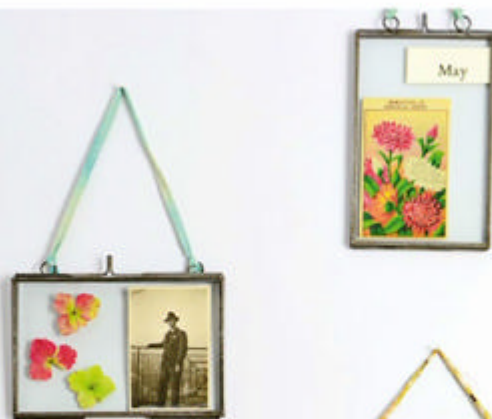


Traditional Chippy plate | £25

This beats eating your haddock, chips and mushy peas off a polystyrene tray by a mile. www.homeslicedesign.com



Summer essentials | £10-35
Pack the car with a deckchair, kettle, barbecue, coolbag and blankets from the House by John Lewis range and set off. www.johnlewis.com



Picture frames | £12.95-£19.95

A neat way to display holiday souvenirs and other special bits and pieces.

www.decoratorsnotebook.co.uk



Dominoes | £12.95

For rainy British holiday entertainment.

www.wildandwolf.com



Silicone Scrunch bucket | £6.99

Crumples to fit into the most congested car boot.

www.bouf.com



Picnic blanket | £36

Light and easy to carry, just roll onto a grassy patch and bring out the sarnies.

shop.thesimplethings.com



Oakwood sunglasses | £120

Tomato red, made from oak and with a great case, there's so much to like about these sunnies.

www.workshopliving.co.uk

Places/Ideas postcards | £12

Images of locations where great thoughts were dreamt up by brilliant minds. Inspirational. www.theschooloflife.com/shop



Light Blue estate emulsion | £38 for 2.5L

A subtle colour that is evocative of limpid seas and the washed-out colours of the coast... dreamy!

www.farrow-ball.com



MAKERS OF THE MONTH

Unique bags made from bouncy castle materials

Based in Bembridge on the Isle of Wight, bag maker Georgia Wyatt-Willsmore sources her fabric – deckchair canvas and retired bouncy castle vinyl PVC – from the local beaches and other British seaside spots. She never really knows what fabric she'll be working with until the next shipment arrives. "I'm looking forward to the next pallet of bouncy castle material," she says. "Apparently there's a lot of colour on it. When it arrives, I'll give it a good wash and see what we've got – it's the best bit."

www.wyattandjack.com

COMFORTING FOOD

More deliciousness in Honey & Co: the baking book, by Itamar Srulovich and Sarit Packer

Husband-and-wife team Itamar and Sarit's heart-warming baking book opens the door on their tiny 10-table restaurant in London and reveals how their working day is "governed by the rhythms of the pastry – weighing, mixing, kneading, shaping, baking, chilling, glazing and serving." It's like a line of poetry, extolling the virtues of their cakes and jams and desserts –

colourful, full of fruit, spices and honey, all with a Middle Eastern slant. There are recipes for candied and crystallised fruit, as well as bleeding heart buns, savoury *Shakshuka* – fiery tomato sauce with poached eggs – and three kinds of yeast bread, all served up with a winning accompaniment of anecdote and memoir. (Saltyard, £17)



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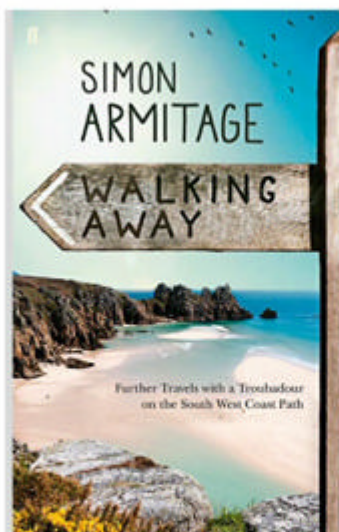
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Large World Map canvas | £295

Pin up this handsome wall chart and plot your next adventure. www.grahamandgreen.co.uk



RAMBLING AND RUMINATING

Simon Armitage goes on a poetical wander along a coastal path in *Walking Away*

In 2010 poet Simon Armitage headed home along the Pennine Way. This time he's reprising his role as a modern day troubadour and paying his way by reading poetry as he walks from Minehead in Somerset to Land's End in Cornwall, strolling "through holiday destinations and tourist traps" and up steep hills armed with a holly stick and an expensive outdoor hat. His route takes him along crumbling coastal paths, through enchanted forests and eerie saltwater marshes, where spectral herons and tree trunks bleached to a silvery white give the landscape an otherworldly quality. (Faber, £16.99)



Clouds Trio fine china set | £25

It's summer on a plate (and bowl), basically. Breakfast need never be dull again. www.cathkidston.com



SHOP OF THE MONTH

Closet and Botts is a store packed with charm and beautiful objects

Housed in a former chemist's, Chloe Shearing and Harriet Maxwell's shop in Lewes, East Sussex, has the original stained-glass windows and a tiny walled garden. Both of which add to the charm of the stock: a mix of vintage, new and handmade homeware, furniture and clothes. You'll find enamelware, fine linens, decorative glassware and beautiful stoneware ceramics, alongside rails hung with dresses by The Seamstress of Bloomsbury, a label that specialises in 1940s-inspired clothes. This is a shop that looks like it's always been there, a credit to the duo's creative vision and sharp eye for well-made objects. A must-visit shop when you next find yourself in the vicinity.

www.closetandbotts.com



Lario bag | £35; Lario apron | £39
Soft 100% linen in the faded colours of a summer evening. Hard to choose between them, really. www.designersguild.com

THE MARITIME LINE

Sailor caps, anchor tattoos and eyepatches in Nautical Chic by Amber Jane Butchart

Ahoy! Amber Jane Butchart's bright and breezy book charts the history of our love affair with maritime fashion – from the blue-and-white striped Breton sweater via the cheeky, worn-at-a-slant sailor caps to the more outré couture creations inspired by mermaids and buccaneers. It's divided into five sections: Officer, Sailor, Fisherman, Sportsman and Pirate*, and is beautifully

illustrated with photographs and fashion sketches, and includes inspiring quotes from designers and artists on the allure of "high fashion on the high seas". Eye patches, epaulettes, peacoats and beach pyjamas are all given their due, as are sailor's tattoos; there's a brilliant picture of Princess Waldemar of Denmark with an anchor on her royal forearm. (Thames & Hudson, £24.95)



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THINGS TO PLAN AND DO

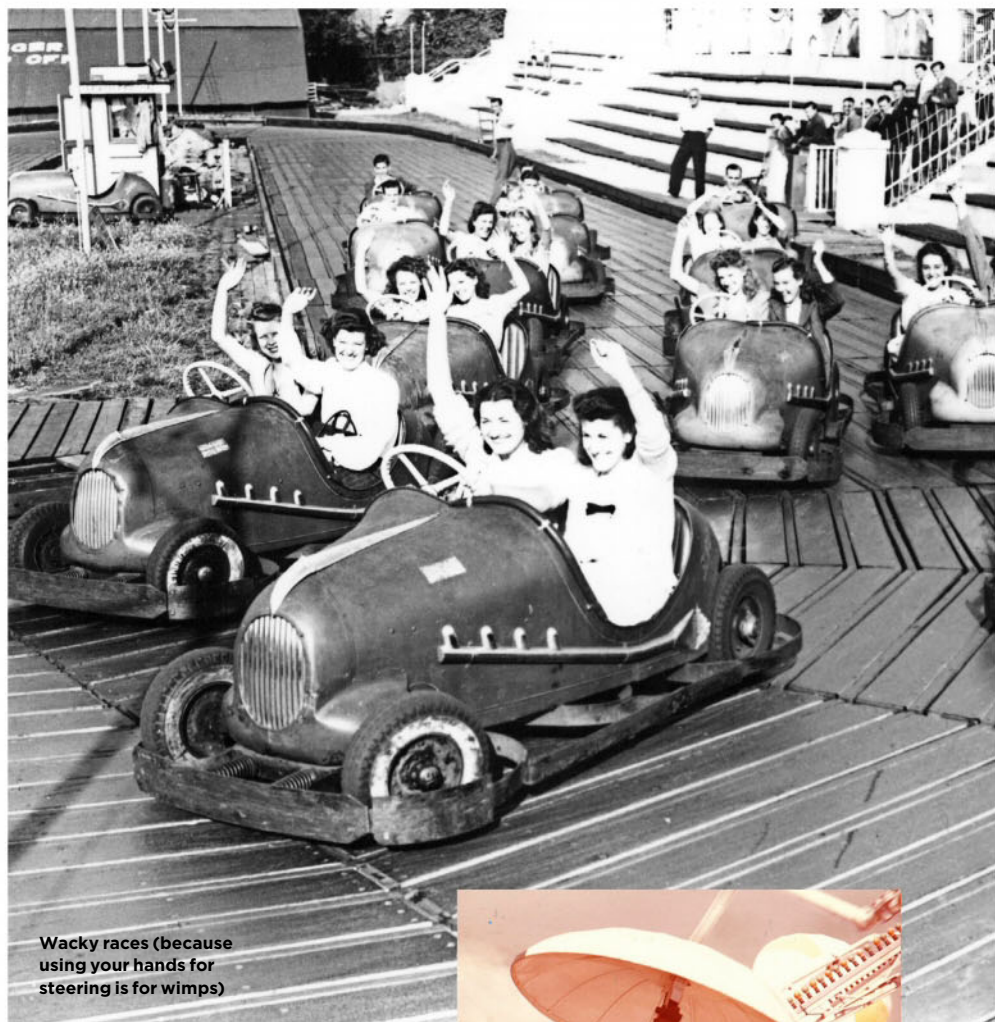
Have fun at the fair, get your dancing shoes on, make guacamole and camp in a church. By Rebecca Frank

Fair play

You don't have to be a child to love a fairground. We can't resist a traditional, old-fashioned funfair with a helter skelter, coconut shy and air thick with the smell of candyfloss and doughnuts. All sticky fingers and queasy tummies.

So we were very excited to hear that Dreamland Margate has just reopened, restored and redesigned under the creative arm of Wayne and Gerardine Hemingway. The park houses a collection of vintage rides including the UK's oldest rollercoaster, the restored 1920s Grade-II listed Scenic Railway, along with other iconic rides. Expect upcycled kitsch seaside artefacts too. If that's too far to travel, Carters Steam Fair is touring again this summer with July dates in both London and Hemel Hempstead. Expect steam-powered rides for all ages and stalls from old penny arcades to archery and a mirror show (www.carterssteamfair.co.uk).

Not strictly a fair but with thrills and vintage charm in buckets, Gifford's Circus will be performing *Moon Songs*, a



Wacky races (because using your hands for steering is for wimps)

tale of a fantasy fairground world performed by a group of clowns and gymnasts in and around Oxford this month (www.giffordscircus.com).

If you're in the southwest, visit Dingles Fairground Heritage Centre in Devon, with working rides and exhibitions on fairgrounds through the ages (www.fairground-heritage.org.uk).

One for the family, Folly Farm (www.folly-farm.co.uk) in Pembrokeshire has



an old-fashioned indoor fairground, a surprising addition to the animals and usual play facilities. Good on a rainy day.



STRICTLY FOR FUN

'We're fools whether we dance or not so we might as well dance' goes the old proverb – and never has a truer word been said...

It's official: dancing makes us laugh and feel happy. To encourage more people to give it a go, www.herbuzz.com has launched Two Left Feet Week (from 19–25 July).

Find listings of your local dance classes on the site and try something new, be it Salsa, Lindy Hop or Zumba. Dancing has been shown to improve both physical and mental health, so you've much more than a new hobby to gain from a trot round the floor.

Your could-do list

Things you might want to do
this month (no pressure!)



DO A LITERARY FESTIVAL

Book-lovers – it's time to spring into action and grab a ticket, if you haven't already, for one of the fabulous festivals taking place this month. Port Eliot (30 July – 2 August, Cornwall, www.porteliot.co.uk), Telegraph Ways with Words Festival of Words and Ideas (3–13 July, Devon, www.wayswithwords.co.uk) and Curious Arts Festival (17–19 July, The New Forest, www.curiousartsfestival.com) all have big names in inspiring surroundings.

TAKE SOME TRAVEL THERAPY

Are you due a holiday? Don't put off going away because you haven't got the time or money right now. Think about what you need/crave whether that's a nature fix, time with friends or family, or the chance to fit in some physical activity, and plan a break that matches your mood – even just a weekend.

GET OUT THE GINGHAM

It's summery, it's fun and is hanging in the most fashionable of wardrobes at the moment. Go sky blue if you're feeling frisky or classic black and white with a splash of colour from a bright bag or shoes.

MY FIRST... GUACAMOLE

As well as being the king of dips, guacamole is delicious in pitta pockets, burritos and wraps. Don't even consider picnicking without it



Serves 2

1 large ripe avocado (150g)
1 large tomato, deseeded and finely chopped (80g)
1 small red onion, finely chopped (80g)
1 red or green chilli (optional)
1 tbsp chopped coriander
1 tsp finely chopped parsley (optional)
1 tsp extra virgin olive oil
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
juice of 1 lime, or to taste

1 Mash the avocado with a fork and mix in the tomato, red onion and chilli, if using.

2 Mix in the coriander and parsley (if using) and season with extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper and plenty of lime juice.

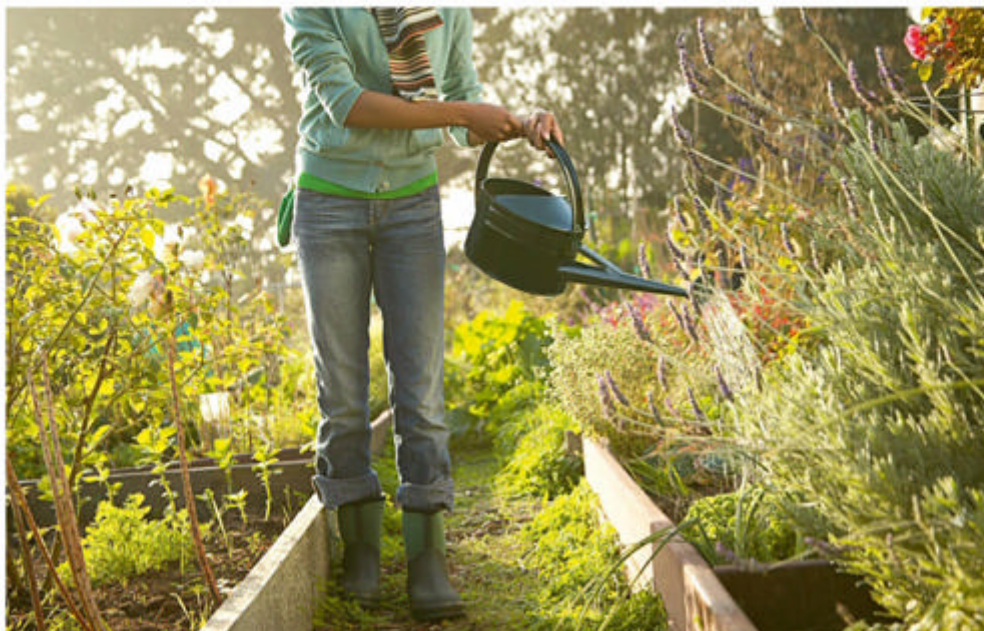
One to try: Place a flour tortilla in a dry frying pan, spread over the guacamole with a sprinkling of grated cheese and fold over to form a semi-circle. Fry on both sides for a couple of minutes until golden brown and the cheese has melted.

Recipe from Thrive On Five by Nina & Jo Littler and Randi Glenn
(Quadrille, £16.99) Photography by Dan Jones

Sounds of summer

Whether it's children playing, the Atlantic waves crashing, wind-breaks blowing or the music of a seaside arcade, we all have sounds that remind us of our coast. If you're heading to the sea this summer, try to capture these evocative sounds on your phone or tablet or a voice recorder and upload them onto a new sound map created by the National Trust and the British Library. As well as your sound recording (maximum five minutes), you have the option to upload images and an explanation of what the sounds mean to you. The map will be on the British Library website until the 'sound of our shores' project finishes on 21 September, when the sounds will be added to the British Library Sound Archive. More information at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/coast.





FIND NEW WAYS TO SWITCH OFF...

A new study shows professional women are most likely to reach for a glass of wine to unwind. But there are alternative stress-relieving activities

● **Change your pre-dinner ritual.** Pop the tea on, then go outside and do something that helps you relax such as taking a short walk or jog or simply watering your plants.

● **Get the juice bug.** We love the Nutribullet, which breaks down the whole food, including skins, stems and seeds, making it easy and extra healthy (£89.99, Lakeland).

● **Be an early bird.** It's much easier to get up early if you're not feeling groggy (and even a glass or two can do that). While the mornings are light, plan a dawn dog walk, try that yoga class, squeeze in a bit of weeding before work or start work early to free up an evening.

● **Practise breathing.** Deep breathing can clear the blood stream of the stress hormone, cortisol, in as little as one minute. The three keys to breathing well are to breathe in and out from the belly, breathe in and out through the nose and breathe out a little more than you breathe in. Find out more in *Do Breathe* by Michael Townsend-Williams (Do Book Co, £8.99).

● **Create a wine jar.** For every bottle of wine you don't open, put the money you've saved in a jar and treat yourself to something gorgeous at the end of the week/month. You'll be surprised how much you save.

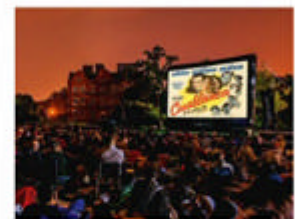
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

It's all about al fresco entertainment with cinemas and theatres popping up on lawns nationwide

Fresh air films

The Luna Cinema has showings around the south-east this month in fun locations from castles to lidos. There are films to suit all tastes from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* to *Birdman*.

www.lunacinema.com



Catch a movie at a castle

At Pentillie Castle in Cornwall, Chapterhouse Theatre will be performing *The Jungle Book* in the castle gardens. Wood-fired pizza oven and bar available (no picnics). 21 July, 6pm, www.pentillie.co.uk

The play's the thing

The National Trust has outdoor theatres at several of its properties around the country over the coming weeks, staging Shakespeare and family favourites such as *George's Marvellous Medicine* and *Alice in Wonderland*. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Screaming screenings

One for the grown-ups, Picnic Cinema is screening cult and horror movies in quirky locations around the north of England - overnight camping, fancy dress and partying. www.picniccinema.co.uk

Can we tell you about... ... champing

Want to truly escape the crowds? Try champing, a new concept in slow tourism from the Churches Conservation Trust. Groups of friends can hire out the whole of a disused church for the night. Camp beds or mattresses, cushions, beanbags and candles are provided, creating a wonderfully atmospheric bedroom. You have the key to the church so during the day you can head out and explore the area, dine in the local pub then return for a sleep like none you've had before. Breakfast is delivered to the church so all you need is a sleeping bag or duvet, warm PJs (it gets quite chilly in the church) and your best collection of ghost stories.

There are three churches offering champing (in Cambridge, Northamptonshire and Kent) at £60 per person for one-night, two-day stay with breakfast. Kids and dogs welcome (under 10s free). www.visitchurches.org.uk/champing





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A THREE-
NIGHT
GLAMPING
BREAK



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Sweffling Hall Farm is close to the sandy beaches of the Suffolk coast, Bleasdale in Lancashire is surrounded by the Forest of Bowland, and Exton Park in Rutland is just a few miles from the diverse wetland habitat of Rutland Water Nature Reserve, home to birds, butterflies, badgers and much more.

At all the sites, you'll enjoy a back-to-nature theme with all the essential conveniences: fully furnished rooms, hot running water, a shower, toilet, bedrooms with real beds and a kitchen. They're all close to nearby attractions and towns, so you can spend the day exploring and come home to a barbecue over your fire pit and a chilled-out supper on your private terrace.

Whether you're looking for a family holiday or a romantic get-away, the colonial-style luxury tents in fantastic British beauty spots provide a sense of comfort under canvas. Find out more at www.lanternandlarks.co.uk.

- The three-night Lantern & Larks stay for up to six people includes a breakfast pack, barbecue pack, campfire pack and fire pit, together worth more than £700.
- Enter at www.thesimplethings.com/blog/lanternandlarks. You can see Iceberg Press' full terms and conditions on page 129 and at www.icebergpress.co.uk/comprules/



JULY

LIVING

YOU'VE JUST GOT TO LOVE SUMMER. A TIME TO PULL ON YOUR DUNGAREES AND BE OUTDOORS. THERE'S THE BARBECUE TO FIRE UP, JUICY BERRIES TO PICK AND ALMOND CAKE FOR TEA



SIMPLE STYLE

DUNGAREES

Words: CLARE GOGERTY

Who would have thought it? Dungarees, for so long abandoned in the fashion wilderness, are having a moment. Once ridiculed for their associations with children's TV presenters, Dexy's Midnight Runners and the Waltons, they are now championed by Alexa Chung and her cronies, which might account for sales increasing by 160% at ASOS last year.

We have been here before, of course. During the 1970s and early 1980s, many a woman (and, tragically, man) rocked around in a pair, often in primary colours. Julie Christie was one of the few who managed to look lovely in them, even with a head scarf. (Though she had the advantage of being whippet-thin: dungarees are really not best suited to the more curvaceous among us.)

They proved complicated, too, when a trip to the ladies was called for, especially when worn with that ill-fated piece of underwear: the body. All that unbuckling,



Julie Christie in dungarees and head scarf combo

unpopping and semi-nakedness really is best left behind.

Dungarees get their name from 'dungri', thick calico cloth made in Dongari Kapa, a village in India. Dyed indigo, made into working clobber and embellished with rivets and buckles, this piece of protective clothing was particularly favoured by farmhands and railroad men. The utilitarian edge survives in dungarees' design today, even among the fancier versions.

So why wear them now? For one thing, they are a welcome alternative to jeans and can be pulled on for weekend home activities when you feel purposeful. Wear a pair and you feel like an achiever without actually doing very much at all. Fashion mavens recommend wearing them with flat sandals and a white shirt, and who are we to argue? Dungarees also have a front patch pocket: somewhere to keep a bus pass or a phone. Come to think of it: that explains their current popularity right there. 


PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

"They can be pulled on at weekends when you feel purposeful"

THE UPDATE



THE CLASSIC

 **Indigo collection dungarees | £45**
In classic blue denim with generous pockets, both in the bib and at the side.
www.marksandspencer.com



TWO WITH A TWIST

 **Printed dungarees | £23**
Crazy patterns and colours make this a potential option for the evening.
www.newlook.com



 **Indigo dungarees | £129**
Wide-legged trousers in black denim are the slouchy choice for daytime mooching. www.toa.st



Cherry



Cherry

agnes & norman
— ENGLAND —



Billie



Billie



0121 415 3040

agnesandnorman.co.uk



• This feast of flavours centres around slow-cooked pork with sides of 'slaw and skewers, and wraps up with a slab of Caribbean black cake



Hot, hot, hot (we hope!)

YOU DON'T NEED A CARIBBEAN CLIMATE TO ENJOY A BARBECUE INSPIRED BY THOSE SUNNY SHORES. FRUITY RUM, JERK PORK AND CHILLI-STUFFED BREAM WILL KICK OFF THE SUMMER - WHETHER IT'S HOT OR NOT

Photography & styling: **CATHERINE FRAWLEY**
 Recipes & food preparation: **CATHERINE FRAWLEY**
 & **MARINA AKONAS**



Nothing heralds the arrival of summer like planning a barbecue. Much of this spread can be prepped in advance, so you can enlist help – and there'll be a backup plan in case the heavens open, in which case we recommend fleeing through the French windows, leaving an unlucky bloke, his tongs and a beer beneath a big umbrella. But there's plenty of heat in the sun-drenched flavours of this Caribbean feast for friends. It's the totally tropical taste, as some long-forgotten ad once claimed. »

Coconut, banana & pineapple rum shake

A SMOOTH, FRUITY SHAKE TO GET YOU IN THE PARTY MOOD

Serves 6

1 x 400ml tin coconut milk
2 large bananas
 $\frac{3}{4}$ medium pineapple, plus extra to garnish (optional)
200ml vanilla ice cream
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground cinnamon
3 tbsp rum (optional – add more or less to taste)

- 1 Put all the ingredients in the jug of a blender and whiz until smooth.
- 2 Pour into a serving jug and distribute, garnished with pineapple wedges if you like.

Fruity 'slaw

A TROPICAL TAKE ON THE CLASSIC CARROT 'N' CABBAGE

Serves 8

$\frac{3}{4}$ medium white cabbage, finely sliced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ medium red cabbage, finely sliced
4 carrots, grated
1 red onion, finely sliced
2 mangos, sliced
Large handful mixed raisins and sultanas
For the dressing
3 tbsp sour cream
3 tbsp mayonnaise
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp wholegrain mustard
1 lime, juiced
salt and pepper, to taste

- 1 Mix all the dressing ingredients together in a bowl.
- 2 Combine the vegetables, mangos and dried fruit in a large bowl and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- 3 Pour over the dressing and mix well.

A shake with a kick: this might look like a wholesome smoothie, but it also contains the classic Caribbean drink – rum



MENU

Coconut, banana & pineapple rum shake



Jerk pulled pork in brioche buns

Fruity 'slaw

Barbecued chilli and lime sea bream

Plantain, prawn & pineapple skewers

Citrus potatoes



Caribbean black cake
Ginger beer cupcakes



There's got to be 'slaw at a barbecue – and this one has extra fruit in the form of mango, raisins and sultanas

Jerk pulled pork in brioche buns

SLOW-COOKED PORK IN SOFT BREAD WILL MELT IN YOUR MOUTH

Serves 6-8

3kg pork shoulder
brioche buns (at least 2 per person), to serve

For the marinade

½ onion, chopped
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 red chilli (with/without seeds, depending how hot you want it)
4 spring onions, chopped
handful fresh thyme
2 tbsp allspice
100ml apple juice
2 tbsp dark muscovado sugar

For the jerk rub

2 cloves garlic
3cm fresh ginger root
1 tbsp allspice
2 tbsp paprika
2 tbsp ground cinnamon
½ nutmeg, grated
50ml apple juice
2 tbsp vinegar
2 tbsp dark muscovado sugar
100ml ketchup

1 Put the marinade ingredients into a food processor and blend to a paste.

2 Score the pork skin with a knife and rub the pork all over with the marinade. Cover and leave to marinate in the fridge overnight.

3 Preheat the oven to 150C/Fan 130/300F. Put the pork in a baking tin and roast for 5-6 hours, checking every so often and basting with the juices. If it starts to look dry, add a little water to the baking tin.

4 Put the jerk rub ingredients into a food processor and blend to a paste.

5 When the pork is done, remove from the oven and set aside until cool enough to handle. Smear over the jerk rub and either finish the pork on the BBQ (cook directly on the grill for 10-15 mins each side or until the skin is golden) or return it to the oven and roast for another 45 mins. »

The pork needs a bit of head start, but the result – super-soft meat in a spicy jerk coating – will be worth the wait

Plantain, prawn & pineapple skewers

A SWEET AND SAVOURY TREAT ON A STICK

Makes 6

3 tbs olive oil

1 tsp chilli flakes

½ lime, juiced

2 large plantains, skin on, sliced

½ pineapple, peeled and chopped

12 cooked, peeled king prawns

fresh thyme, to garnish

salt and pepper, to taste

Equipment

6 barbecue skewers, metal or wooden

1 In a small bowl, mix together the oil, chilli flakes and lime, and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

2 Heat a griddle pan until smoking, brush with oil and griddle the plantains, prawns and pineapple in batches, until cooked. The plantain will take longer to cook; the prawns and pineapple just need to be griddled until brown. Brush on both sides with the chilli oil and set aside.

3 When cooled enough to handle assemble the ingredients on your skewers and garnish with the fresh thyme.

Citrus potatoes

ZESTY, SPICY, NEW POTATO ROASTIES

Serves 6–8

1.5kg Charlotte potatoes

olive oil

½ fresh red chilli, sliced

½ lemon, juiced

½ lime, juiced

salt and pepper, to taste

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/Fan 180/400F.

2 Peel the potatoes and cut into



cubes. Tip into a large mixing bowl, season with salt and freshly ground pepper, and toss with the oil and most of the chilli.

3 Tip onto a baking tray, spread out evenly and roast for 30 mins.

4 Remove from the oven, squeeze over the lemon and lime, and roast for a further 10 mins, or until golden.

4 Serve, garnished with the reserved red chilli.



Buy your fish as fresh as possible and ask the fishmonger to prepare it for you. If you don't have a barbecue fish holder, far right, you can also cook the bream on a griddle pan indoors



Barbecued chilli and lime sea bream

FRESH FISH WITH
SHARP LIME AND
SPICY RED CHILLI

Serves 6

3 large sea bream, cleaned and gutted by your fishmonger
olive oil
2 limes, 1 sliced and 1 cut into wedges, to serve
small bunch fresh parsley
small bunch fresh thyme
1 red chilli, chopped (retain the seeds for extra heat)
salt and pepper, to taste

1 Brush the sea bream inside and out with olive oil, then season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
2 Stuff the cavities with the sliced lime, parsley, thyme and chilli.
3 Transfer to a barbecue fish holder and barbecue for 10 mins, turning once. To cook indoors, heat a griddle pan until smoking and cook, one at a time, for 10 mins, turning once (or until the fish flakes easily).
4 Transfer the fish to a serving platter, squeeze over some lime and serve. »



Caribbean black cake

THIS 'TROPICAL CHRISTMAS CAKE' IS A REAL OCCASION BAKE

Serves 8-10

150g prunes, pitted and chopped
300g mixed raisins and sultanas
100g dried cherries
200ml rum
50ml cherry brandy
250g unsalted butter
250g dark muscovado sugar
3 eggs, beaten
250g self-raising flour
1 tbsp ground cinnamon
1 tbsp allspice
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 orange (zest)
1 lime (zest)

To decorate

3 tbsp apricot jam, to glaze
raisins, to decorate

You will need

9 inch deep cake tin, greased, base lined with parchment

1 Tip the prunes, raisins, sultanas and cherries into a large bowl. Pour over the rum and cherry brandy, cover and leave to soak for at least 48 hours or even up to a week. Stir occasionally.

2 Preheat the oven to 170C/150 Fan/325F. Cream the butter and sugar with an electric whisk until light and fluffy. With a wooden spoon, beat in the eggs one at a time until combined.

3 Add the flour, cinnamon, allspice, vanilla extract, and orange and lime zests. Mix together, then add the soaked fruit and mix well until the fruit is evenly distributed.

4 Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 30 mins. Reduce the heat to 150C/130Fan/300F and bake for another 2 hours, or until a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean. Leave to cool partially in the tin, then transfer to a wire rack to finish cooling.

5 When completely cool, heat the apricot jam in a small pan and brush over the cake to glaze, keeping a little in the pan to coat the raisins.

6 Decorate with the raisins, then glaze them with the jam too.



If you have any dried fruit and brandy left in your pantry from your Christmas cake, this is a great way to use it up



Polish off the barbecue feast with a ginger cupcake or a slab of moist fruit cake

Ginger beer buns

LASHINGS OF GINGER BEER IS THE ICING ON THE CUPCAKE

Makes 12-18

125g unsalted butter, softened

50g cocoa powder

125ml ginger beer

60ml milk

1 tsp lime juice

250g self raising flour

250g caster sugar

2 tsp ground cinnamon

2 eggs

½ tsp baking powder

1 pinch of salt

For the butter icing

200g icing sugar

80g unsalted butter, softened

splash ginger beer

For dusting

½ tsp ground ginger

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 Preheat the oven to 180C/ Fan 160/350F. Line a cupcake tray with cases.

2 In a saucepan, gently melt the butter, cocoa powder, ginger beer, milk and lime juice.


3 In a large bowl, mix together the flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder and a pinch of salt. Beat in the eggs one at a time until thoroughly combined.

4 Stir in the butter and cocoa mixture. You will end up with a looser consistency than the usual cupcake mix.

5 Fill the cases to around three-quarters full with mixture and bake for 12-15 mins, or until a skewer comes out clean.

6 Leave to cool on a wire rack.

7 Meanwhile, for the butter icing, use an electric whisk to beat most of the icing sugar and butter until smooth. Add the ginger beer and the remaining icing sugar and continue to beat until you have a smooth, creamy mixture.

8 When the cupcakes have cooled completely, spoon or pipe on the butter icing. Mix together the ginger and cinnamon and dust over the top. 



“People coming together to trade food is the reason cities exist. We’re moving from an age where money is a motivation to one where meaning is”

For Petra Barran, founder of street food collective KERB, there’s much more to street food than a sandwich on the run. She explains how food can build communities to Jenny Linford

A

s anyone who visits festivals or markets will have noticed, street food in Britain has been transformed. No longer monopolised by vans selling dubious hot dogs, today’s street food traders offer a globetrotting array of consumables – pizza, burritos, burgers, mac ‘n’ cheese, dosas – often with an inventive, individual twist. Petra Barran, a former street trader who spent six years travelling with her “wagon of chocolate joy” – her van, Choc Star – is a driving force in Britain’s thriving street food scene. She co-founded eat.st, Britain’s first street food collective, then KERB, which champions a community of street food traders in London. She’s often cast as its spokesperson, a role she has taken on with brio.

A natural communicator, Petra’s a happy addressing an audience of political movers and shakers at London’s City Hall on how street food enhances urban life as she ever was selling her chocolate treats. She feels the appeal of street food, both for those who sell it and those who buy it, has deep roots in the human psyche. “People coming together to trade food is the reason cities exist. It is so full of meaning. You can say it’s because of the recession, empty buildings becoming available, Jamie Oliver’s influence, people wanting to start their own businesses, the low point of entry, but I think it’s to do with moving from an age where money is a motivation to one where meaning is a motivation.” Petra contrasts the self-sufficiency of life

as a street food trader with working for a corporation. “You get to be master of your own ship. You design your own business and then present it to the world in public. Your entire product – whether it goes right or wrong – is up to you. You put hard work into the food you’re making then you get the satisfaction of seeing people try it. You get to tangibly make money.”

PETRA’S PATH BEFORE THE STREET

Appropriately, there’s an adventurous, maverick streak to Petra’s life. She talks of having ‘visions’, coming to turning points, following hunches. Born and brought up in Suffolk, she credits her family with giving her a deep-rooted, natural love of food. “I come from a family of really good cooks, people who grow food, pull it out of the ground. My dad was always picking up road kill! Forever pulling the car over and reversing back to scrape some splayed animal off the road which he’d transform by jugging it.”

Petra’s first ‘proper job’ was as an assistant casting director for TV commercials and pop videos. “You get to go up to strangers and say ‘hey, you’d be good for this part’. That’s what I love. I love strangers!” Itchy feet, however, saw her buying a one-way ticket to Antibes in the south of France to work on super-yachts as a stewardess. “I’d always wanted to do that. When I was a kid, my uncle’s girlfriend worked on them and she’d tell stories about drinking champagne out of her stilettos and wild times in the Caribbean. It sounded »

PHOTOGRAPHY: TRENT MCMINN



Petra's passion for street food has helped transform the way we eat today



so exciting.” She spent four years alternately working on yachts for six-month periods, then travelling solo. “It was fun, but it was also full on, the hardest work,” she reflects. “You’re floating around in this bubble, trying to make everything perfect for the clients, trying to get on with the crew that you have to live with. You learn a lot of tolerance, which I probably really needed to learn.”

Characteristically, she was fascinated by the “power play of service – looking after your guests without being subservient to them. I really enjoyed the challenge of managing the people to the point where they respected me.” The list of places Petra visited during this nomadic period is a long one. “You get addicted,” she says frankly. “I used to look at women in that industry who hadn’t managed to leave it; they’d done it for so long they didn’t know what else to do and they had lost their nerve. Women in their 30s and 40s who had been in too much sun, drunk too much alcohol, worked too hard. I thought ‘no, that can’t be me.’”

A VISION OF A VAN – CALLED JIMMY

Suddenly feeling homesick, she decided to return to Britain. “I wanted to do something great when I got there, but didn’t know what.” While working in Italy, however, she had a ‘vision’ while watching television. “I said to myself the next channel I get to will give me a sign. And the next channel was a Catholic service, so I knew that I had to do something I believed in. OK, I thought, the next channel I turn to will be what that



thing is. The next channel was a cooking programme. I thought ‘Of course, it’s food!’ So silly, but I had never thought about food, it had just been part of my life.”

Returning to London, Petra’s next epiphany – “an amazing lightbulb moment” – was that she should set up a chocolate stall, an idea which evolved into taking to the road with a chocolate van. She bought a Leyland DAF 1993 diesel van from eBay, and named it Jimmy. She insists that this impulsive step wasn’t easy. “Setting up that van was the scariest thing I’d ever done. I’d jumped in so quickly because I knew that way I’d be committed; I had to make it happen. I’ve never



- ❶ Petra's milkshake brings all the boys (and girls) to the yard
- ❷ Shelling out – another of the KERB collective's traders feeds the crowds
- ❸ Petra tempts the customers with her chocolatey wares
- ❹ Where the magic happens: inside the van

had such a burning sense of purpose and destiny and how I had to do this or I would regret it. People would say 'Aren't you scared?' And I'd say, 'Yes, I am scared, but I'm more scared of *not* doing it.'

Petra worked at festivals and private parties and also took to the road on a 'tour', offering chocolate desserts to any stranger who would take her in and give her supper and a bed for a night. "It's back to the whole thing of loving strangers," she says happily. "I'd open up the hatch and there'd be people who'd approached my van because they saw I sell chocolate, with a look of wonder in their eyes. Chocolate brings out the child in people." There was also a democratic strand to her vision. "I wanted to make good chocolate something anyone could have. I served privileged American kids in Chelsea, rough little kids in Middlesbrough, young Bangladeshi kids in Barking, old hippies in Dartmoor. I loved the way Choc Star enabled me to access different groups of people." She feels that there was something about the van, as opposed to having a stall, which struck a chord; "I think we all have that bit of gypsy blood coursing through our veins."

BETTER TOGETHER

While running Choc Star, Petra encountered other street food traders and was struck by the sense of community. "Everyone looks after each other. I never had the right equipment and people were always lending me stuff or helping me batten down the hatches when the weather was bad." This gave her the

STREET LIFE

The Petra Barran CV

- 1975** Petra born in Ipswich, Suffolk
- 1995-1999** Studies American Studies at the University of Manchester, with an exchange year in Missouri
- 1999-2000** Works as an assistant casting director for Layton & Norcliffe Casting in London's Notting Hill
- 2000-2004** Travels the world, working on super-yachts
- 2005-2011** Founds Choc Star and hits the road, selling chocolate treats from Jimmy, her van
- 2009-2011** Co-founds eat.st, Britain's first street food collective
- 2010-2015** Studies for a degree in Urban Studies at University College London
- 2012** Petra founds KERB, a collective of more than 50 London-based street food traders, running street food markets and events all over the capital


"Street food adds so much personality and life to public spaces; for cities to encourage it would be very progressive"

inspiration to co-found eat.st, bringing together a small group of traders. "Just by clustering you make something more apparent to everyone and it multiplies."

Inspired by Carolyn Steel's book *Hungry City* – a reflection on the urban population's relationship with food and its journey to our tables – she became interested in how food shapes cities. She began an MSc in Urban Studies at University College London: "That course really informed a lot of what I was thinking."

In 2012 she set up KERB. The street food traders brought into the fold are chosen "as much on their spirit and vision as on food." What qualities does she look for in a KERB trader? "You have to be persistent, tenacious, really good with people."

As KERB's founder, Petra works to persuade London's landowners of the intangible value KERB traders bring. "It's about making a space people want to go to, the cultural value you add to somewhere at a time when places are becoming more like each other."

Looking forward, Petra has a rallying vision of street food in Britain. "I would love there to be loads of dedicated places around every city, where you can access all this wonderful food and brilliant energy of the people making it. I want cities all over the country to make this possible, because it will save them from just being blocks of gold where only rich people can live. Street food just adds so much more personality and life to public spaces; for cities to encourage it would be very progressive." To find out more, see Kerb's website www.kerbfood.com 



Podding broad beans in preparation for cooking can be a strangely soothing task



SEED *to* STOVE

SUMMER IS SERVED

LIA LEENDERTZ'S ALLOTMENT IS BURSTING WITH TENDER GREEN VEG AND HERBS - JUST RIGHT FOR VIBRANT RISOTTO, PESTO, PURÉE AND NO-FUSS STIR-FRIES

Photography: **KIRSTIE YOUNG**





Both baby courgettes and their flowers are good for eating, as are nasturtium flowers, although they pack a peppery punch



Lia's summer garden risotto makes delicious use of the season's best produce, including green beans, courgettes and chives



This is a month where the tide starts to turn at the plot, and the ratio of work to harvesting tips in my favour. It's lovely to reap the benefits of all the hard graft of spring, and it's also a beautiful time to be at the plot, with my usual hilltop gales turned to gentle, warm winds. On a clear day I can see for miles through the heat haze. The bees are buzzing about making honey for our plot-neighbour's hives, while ensuring all of my fruit and vegetables are perfectly pollinated. Soon it will be the school holidays and the plot will be transformed into a play place – all climbing trees, digging for worms and requests for drinks – but for now it's just me, the warm breeze and the bees, and plenty of delicious young produce to pick and enjoy.

Courgettes this young and tender can be eaten raw in salads



IN SEASON THIS MONTH

July is the first of the months when the wheelbarrow heads home more laden than it arrives. Until now I've been endlessly ferrying plants up the hill and returning with a few delicate morsels. Now the traffic is the other way: new potatoes, spinach, gooseberries, carrots, strawberries, broad beans and, above all, courgettes. They're one of the crops it's hard to fail with, and I've always grown a maximum of three plants to avoid being overwhelmed by them in mid summer. Last year I tried a different strategy, planting 10 plants of different varieties, but picking them when they're tiny, often with the flowers attached. There were never too many, and each is so sweet and tender that I can't wait for more to come along. »



Summer garden risotto

Risotto is one of those dishes that can provide a beautiful base for whatever is in season, so it's a good dish to have in your repertoire if you often find yourself staring at piles of muddy vegetables and wondering what to do with them.

Serves 6

130g butter

1 large onion, diced

2 cloves of garlic, crushed

1 medium courgette, sliced

3 small courgettes, sliced

400g risotto rice

1 litre vegetable or chicken stock

2 glasses white wine

a handful of green beans,
topped, tailed and chopped

a handful of mangetout

a few spring onions, finely sliced
(use the whole spring onion,
including the green parts)

90g parmesan, finely grated, plus
extra to garnish

2 tbs olive oil

Small bunch chives, chopped
salt and pepper

1 Melt 30g of the butter in a pan and cook the onions over a gentle heat until soft and translucent. Add the garlic, the medium courgette, and cook for a minute or two, then stir in the rice. When it starts to take on a slight translucency, add the wine and stir until absorbed.

2 Add the stock, a ladle or cup full at a time, stirring until absorbed after each addition. The rice will slowly start to soften and release all of the creamy starch the dish needs. When the rice is not quite cooked and there is still some stock to go, stir in the beans, mangetout and spring onions.

3 Keep adding stock until the rice is soft, yet still has a slight bite, adding water if the stock runs out. Remove from the heat, and stir in the rest of the butter and the parmesan. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and leave it to sit for a few minutes.

4 Meanwhile, fry the small courgettes in the olive oil until browned on both sides. Serve the risotto immediately, topped with the chives, the courgette discs and extra slivers of parmesan.



Lia's summery risotto looks as good as it tastes – with or without the flower garnish



Deep-fried courgette flowers with broad bean, pea and mint purée and basil pesto

Make the purée and the pesto ahead, and fry the courgette flowers at the last minute for a gorgeous plate full of high-summer flavours. Freshly made basil pesto is just right for a touch of something piquant and herbal among the gentler flavours.

Serves 4

For the purée

250g broad beans, double podded* (about 1kg unpodded weight)
250g peas, podded (frozen peas thawed in a little lukewarm water will also do fine)
250g ricotta cheese
handful of mint leaves, finely chopped
squeeze of lemon juice
salt and pepper

For the basil pesto

50g toasted pine nuts
1 clove of garlic, crushed
1 large bunch of basil (for leaves)
extra virgin olive oil
50g finely grated parmesan

For the deep-fried courgette flowers

8 courgette flowers
sunflower or vegetable oil
125g plain flour
½ tsp salt
175ml ice cold water

1 Put all the ingredients for the purée, except the lemon juice, in a bowl and whiz to a smoothish texture with a



The smooth veggie purée is easy to whizz up and complements the crunchy deep-fried parcel with its delicate morsel of courgette flowers within



hand blender. Add the lemon juice, season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for up to a day.

2 For the basil pesto, use a pestle and mortar to crush the pine nuts and garlic together. Season to taste, add the basil leaves and grind to a paste before slowly adding olive oil until you have the consistency you want. Stir in the parmesan and set aside.

3 Prepare the courgette flowers by teasing them open and pulling out the yellow stamens or style. Aim to create a completely empty space

within the petals. It doesn't matter if the flower rips a little in the process.

4 Heat the oil in a high-sided saucepan. It should fill no more than a third of the pan to allow for bubbling up. Sieve the flour and salt into a bowl and whisk in the water.

5 When the oil is ready (a cube of bread will fizz and go brown), dip the flowers into the batter and lower into the oil. Fry up to three at a time for 1-2 minutes, until golden brown on one side, then flip over and brown the other side. Drain on kitchen paper serve immediately. »



* To double-pod broad beans, remove them from their pods, bring a saucepan of water to the boil and add the beans. Cook for approximately two mins, then drain. Transfer them to a bowl of cold water. Then pop the green beans out of their skins with a gentle squeeze.




Baby courgettes with pancetta and dill

A delicious and very quick lunch. Courgette flowers are really good simply fried in butter until they turn slightly crisp, so pick young courgettes with the flowers still attached, if you can.

Serves 2

80g pancetta cubes
about 10 baby courgettes
small bunch dill
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp white wine vinegar

1 Heat a frying pan and add the pancetta. Halve the courgettes and remove any inside parts of the flowers. When the pancetta has just started to brown, add the courgette halves to the pan and fry with the pancetta until crisp and brown.

2 Finely chop the dill and put it in a jar with the oil, vinegar and a little salt. Close the lid and shake. Tip the courgettes and pancetta onto a plate, pour over the dill dressing and serve straight away. 



Get them while they're young: baby courgettes taste great fried with pancetta



LIA LOVES

I've never noticed any great differences between the flavours of the various courgettes, so I go for variety of colour and shape more than anything. I like the look of a dish made from a mixture of yellow, light green and dark green courgettes and, if I can find them, a mixture of thin, bulbous and round types, too.

1 STRIATO DI NAPOLI

Dark and pale green striped courgette; good looking and early.
www.realseeds.co.uk

2 TRIESTE WHITE

Pale green and bulbous; early to fruit.
www.realseeds.co.uk

3 SOLEIL

A lovely golden-skinned courgette that I've found very productive.
shop.otterfarm.co.uk

4 TONDO

Perfectly round courgette; good for stuffing and baking.
www.seedsofitaly.com



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PESKY PIGEONS

GARDEN ORGANIC SHARES ITS SOLUTION FOR MANAGING BIG PESTS THE ORGANIC WAY

While we often worry about the creepy crawlies in our crops, bigger pests have larger appetites, causing more devastation. Pigeons in particular have a strong liking for brassica plants and can demolish cabbages, broccoli or kale overnight. The often-cited solutions of scarecrows, CDs or pointy sticks have been scientifically proven to be ineffective.

Once a pigeon spots your plants, the only deterrent is to cover them with netting. There is no need for expensive structures – the blue water pipe available in most hardware stores will work. Simply cut to the right length, bend into hoops, then cover with netting. It is worth investing in some good quality fine netting – it will last for many years and keep most intruders away.



Garden Organic is the national charity for organic growing. Support the charity's work by becoming a member and access 60 years of expertise on organic growing to help your own garden flourish.
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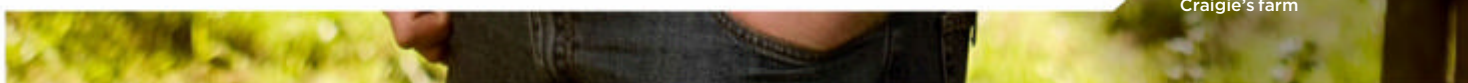


THE EXPERT: BRITISH BERRIES

AT JOHN SINCLAIR'S PICK-YOUR-OWN FARM, PEOPLE ARE BUSY PACKING THEIR PUNNETS WITH HIS SWEET FRUITS

Words: **RACHAEL OAKDEN**

As well as the soft fruit, John tends acres of orchards at Craigie's farm



A punnet of freshly picked strawberries, red, ripe and bursting with sugary juices... it's a taste memory from a bygone age. At least, that's how it feels every time you bite into the bland, bullet-hard supermarket varieties.

In fact, the British berries that encapsulate the taste of summer are ripening to perfection on a bush near you right now: strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries and currants, plump, sweet and there for the plucking at a local pick-your-own (PYO) farm.

West Craigie, a 260-acre arable holding six miles from Edinburgh, is one such venue. It's the home of tenant farmer John Sinclair, who followed his father into soft-fruit growing in the late 1980s as a diversification from a no-longer-viable dairy-farming business. He grows more than 40,000 tonnes of fruit, including strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, tayberries, redcurrants and blackcurrants, of which nearly half are self-picked by PYO visitors. The rest is either sold in the farm shop on the day it's picked or frozen for jam-making; John's wife, Kirsteen, and mother, Anne, make around 30,000 jars of Craigie's Jam Kitchen preserves each year.

"The Scottish climate is perfect for soft fruit, because of the long daylight hours and low temperatures," John says. "It matures more slowly, laying down sugars and developing intense flavour: here a strawberry takes about 10 days longer to come from flower to fruit than it does in the south of England." While he appreciates the intense fructose-filled hit of a Scottish strawberry, it's the sharpness of Scotland's signature fruit that really makes his mouth water. "I don't have a very sweet tooth, but I could eat raspberries until I burst."

Why don't strawberries taste like they used to?

They do. But most strawberries eaten in the UK have been picked about a week before they're ripe, because they need to travel from the farm to the packing firm to the supermarket shelf and still have a four-day shelf life. Elsanta strawberries, for example, have a bad name because they're the mainstay of the Spanish export crop. I'm sure if you ate a ripe one straight from the plant in Spain, it would taste very good. But if you buy them out of season in a supermarket, when you bite into one, you just think: 'Why?' You might as well be eating a turnip.

Should we avoid Elsanta strawberries, then?

Not at all. We grow four varieties of strawberry at West Craigie, including Elsanta, and when we did a blind taste test here for a local Slow Food group, Elsanta came out on top. You wouldn't know it was the same fruit as the imported version, let alone the same variety. There are subtle differences between varieties in terms of season, shape, size and firmness. But the most important thing is that the fruit is picked when it's ready.



"A ripe strawberry eaten at the height of summer is so sweet and juicy that you just want to keep going back for more"

So how can we experience the perfect berry?

A ripe strawberry eaten at the height of the summer is so sweet and juicy that you just want to keep going back for more. To enjoy them like that, you have a narrow window. At West Craigie we pick strawberries every other day; leave them on the bush any longer and they start to spoil. Raspberries are even worse: when they're ripe they have to be picked that day. They go deep, dark red and all you have to do is shake the bush. Fruit goes over very quickly, so you want to eat it on the day it's picked: in an ideal world you'd eat it straight off the plant.

Is it safe to eat fruit straight off the bush?

I've always eaten my own fruit off my own plants and there's nothing wrong with me. But there are birds and other wildlife around – although that's not such a problem in polytunnels – so there's no guarantee the fruits are clean. You should always wash supermarket or greengrocer fruit as it will have been handled by several different people during the picking and packing process.

What about pesticide residues?

We don't blanket-spray pesticides for the fun of it; they're there for a serious reason and we only use them when we have to. For example, we spray our raspberry bushes for raspberry beetle before they come into flower, but one year my farm manager missed a row. The number of people complaining about beetles crawling »

Above, some of the tempting berries (and plums) on offer at John's farm shop



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“Take berries out of the fridge well before you eat them. Like a good red wine, their flavour and aroma are best appreciated at room temperature”

out of their raspberries gave me more grief than the rest of the crop put together. Our fruits are regularly tested to ensure that pesticide residues are below safe limits.

Why is it so hard to find organically grown berries?

You can grow soft fruits organically in your own garden. But to get the economies of scale, you have to have a lot of fruit in a small area, which means there's more pressure from pests and diseases, such as aphids and mildew. You could probably supply everyone with organic strawberries if you had enough land to grow them on. But the cost of those strawberries would be astronomical.

Why do you grow strawberries and raspberries in polytunnels?

To protect them from botrytis, which you'll recognise if you've ever bought or picked a punnet of strawberries and discovered the next day they're all white and fluffy. Botrytis loves wet, warm weather, and if you get a rainy summer, it will spread very quickly. We decided to start growing under cover after two summers when we'd had to walk away from strawberry crops worth hundreds of thousands of pounds. An added bonus is that it extends the growing season from June to early September.

What does a tayberry taste like?

It's a hybrid of a blackberry and a raspberry. If you put one of each in your mouth and chew, that's what a tayberry tastes like. There are other raspberry-bramble hybrids, including the loganberry, but the tayberry is the sweetest and largest. It makes beautiful sweet-sharp jam and appeals to PYO pickers as it's something a bit different. As a commercial grower, I can't say it's my favourite: it's covered with thorns and grows all over the place, making it pretty difficult to harvest.

Should we give gooseberries a go?

They're the Marmite of berries. But people who think of

them as a hard, sour fruit that's only good for cooking should try them when they've been left on the plant to ripen. They double in size and become so sweet you can eat them straight off the bush, like grapes. We grow smooth ones, hairy ones, green ones, red ones. The gooseberry and rhubarb chutney they make in our jam kitchen is splendid on a cheese sandwich.

What's the secret of good jam?

Pick small, firm fruit – the higher water content of larger berries makes jam difficult to set. We don't put anything in our jam except ripe fruit and sugar. If you want to reduce the sugar content, you have to add other ingredients to make it set, and we took a decision early on not to do that. I'd rather have one tablespoon of real jam on my morning toast instead of two tablespoons of reduced sugar jam – raspberry on brown is my favourite.

How should berries be stored and preserved?

Strawberries and large raspberries, which contain more water, are damaged by the freezing process, whereas smaller, firmer raspberries and currants hold their shape better. Freeze on trays, then pop into an airtight bag and they'll keep for at least a year. Tip frozen berries straight into the jam pan, or defrost and make into puddings. Fresh berries will keep for a few days in the fridge. Just remember to take them out well before you eat them. Like a good red wine, their flavour and aroma are best appreciated at room temperature. »

Above left, a PYO afternoon isn't complete without sampling the homebaked pastries in the café; middle, and right, the intense flavour of berries eaten straight from the bush on a sunny day really can't be beaten

JOHN SINCLAIR always wanted to follow his father into farming at West Craigie although, as the manager of an arable PYO, deli, shop and café, he says he now spends more time at a desk than in a tractor. For a week each year he jumps behind the wheel of a combine harvester to help out a neighbour at harvest time: "It's how I get my fix of big machines." www.craigies.co.uk, 0131 319 1048.



NOTES ON BERRIES

OUR NATIVE BERRY SEASON IS A PRECIOUS INTERLUDE THAT'S OVER ALL TOO QUICKLY. HERE'S HOW TO SAVOUR EVERY ONE

Photography: **ROSIE BARNETT** Words: **RACHAEL OAKDEN**

BLACKBERRIES


HEDGEROWS BURSTING WITH FAT, JUICY BRAMBLES ARE THE SILVER LINING OF A SOGGY SUMMER. IF YOU REACH YOUR LIMIT OF CRUMBLES, TRY BLACKBERRY VODKA OR VINEGAR.

REDCURRANTS

THESE GLASSY JEWELS CAN MAKE MORE THAN JUST JELLY. BRUSH WITH EGG WHITE AND ROLL IN SUGAR TO MAKE A SPRINKLE FOR A PAVLOVA.

STRAWBERRIES

IF YOU COULD BOTTLE 'THE PERFECT DAY' IT WOULD TASTE LIKE A STRAWBERRY: SWEET, NOSTALGIA-INDUCING, AROMATIC. NO TOPPINGS REQUIRED.



PINEBERRIES
NATIVE TO SOUTH AMERICA,
THESE WHITE-FLESHED, RED-
SEEDED STRAWBERRIES-IN-
REVERSE HAVE BEEN REVIVED
BY DUTCH PLANT BREEDERS.

*Just to confuse
matters, I taste
like pineapple*

RASPBERRIES
NORTHERN LOVELIES WITH A TANG
IN THE TAIL. LAYER WITH CREAM,
WHISKY, HONEY AND TOASTED
OATS TO MAKE A CLASSIC SCOTTISH
PUD WORTH WAITING FOR.

BLUEBERRIES
AMERICA'S ANTIOXIDANT-RICH
SUPER-FRUIT LOVES BRITAIN'S
COLD CLIMATE. FILL THE FREEZER
WITH THEM FOR BREAKFAST
PANCAKES ALL YEAR ROUND.

BEYOND THE NINE-TO-FIVE

WILD IN THE COUNTRY

RUNNING A BUSINESS IS ABOUT EVERYDAY DISCOVERY, SAYS JADE SCOTT, FOUNDER OF DORSET'S FORE ADVENTURE

Words: **HANNAH BULLIVANT**

It is possible to escape the rat race.

I trained as an architect and spent my waking hours glued to the computer screen, while my husband, Dan, was a manager in an outdoor centre and was spending more and more of his days doing paperwork rather than the outdoor activities that got him hooked in the first place. After we had our first daughter, Molly, our perspective shifted and we had an itching desire to connect with nature as more of our daily norm. Then my aunt called one day, on Dan's 30th birthday in fact, and told us about a little hut on Studland Beach that had come up for lease. We haven't looked back since.

Changing careers is hard. But it's worth

it. That little hut was the basis for our dream. I'm not going to sugar-coat how difficult the decision to go for it was. Molly was only two months old when we tendered for the lease with the National Trust. I worried about what we were giving up: our friends, our steady jobs and all that was familiar. But every time I set foot on Dorset soil it felt like coming home. We had a tense few months before we got the go-ahead from the National Trust, but when that phone call came through, we were on cloud nine. In the end it was easy to leave our old life behind.

Businesses change as you do. What we have now is so different to what we started off with five years ago: just the hut and four sea kayaks. We built up a good reputation for kayaking and, over the years, we added more strings to our bows. I became more involved, not just behind the scenes but training to become a beach school and forest school leader. Molly would come to work with us every day that first summer when she was a baby, and still is a regular face with customers now



along with her sisters, Poppy and Olive. We all enjoy food and love to forage and today that's the thread that ties everything together. We forage and fish, but also do bushcraft and beach school, kayaking and coasteering, wild food and wild camping.

The bonus of being self-employed is what you stumble across along the way. This isn't what I thought our life would look like. Our 'Hutquarters' have become a second home to our children. From the way they responded to the experiences we gave them, we saw that other children would gain from them, too. That was our motivation for setting up our beach and forest schools. We now work with Poppy and Olive's nursery and Molly's school.

Everyone has an adventurer within them. Our 'fish forage feast' was born when customers booked a kayaking expedition but came back three hours later with a fistful of sea vegetables and a boat full of mackerel to cook on

- 1 A quick squeeze of lemon over the day's catch makes for a simple but delicious supper
- 2 Dan and Jade's three girls have virtually grown up on the beach
- 3 Jade heads off, basket in hand, to lead another foraging trip
- 4 Helping others learn to hunt for seashore edibles is one of the couple's greatest pleasures



the beach. We can reach areas for foraging by kayak, snorkelling or coasteering that you can't reach on foot. This adventurous process underpins all our activities: going out, hunting, catching and identifying everything. For our customers, being able to pick, prepare and eat seaweed, for example, just blows their mind.

It's satisfying to break out of your four walls. It's not only children who benefit from being with nature and learning how to respect, value and understand the environment. Getting rosy cheeks, muddy knees and windswept hair is good for the soul – us grown-ups can learn a thing or two as well. There's something deeply gratifying in finding and cooking your own food. It's so clearly evident whether working with children or adults – it appeals to all the senses.

Businesses are driven by love. We are ambitious, but we're not looking for world domination or monetary reward. It's about the little things, such as happy customers who come again and again, foraging for supper and cooking up freshly caught fish on the beach or, at the end of a busy day, watching the girls running in and out of the sea. There's a way to go but we're enjoying the journey. We're happy being tortoises not hares.

Having your own business is all about the day to day. Yesterday we hosted a beach school day for three families. We built shelters, scavenged for natural treasures and seashore edibles, had a lesson in fire-lighting and wood skills and used our foraged finds to rustle up some homemade bread on our wood-fired barbecue. It was topped off with a marshmallow toasting ceremony fit for any worthy adventurer! Our reward is the life we live.
www.foreadventure.co.uk



LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Diving

A 60-SECOND INSIGHT INTO A NEW PERSONAL CHALLENGE

By **FRANCES AMBLER**

THE DREAM is a graceful swan dive from some cliffs into an azure sea. The health and safety reality is a swimming pool with dedicated diving area and lifeguards on demand. But being able to dive certainly adds a touch of class to the average pool visit.

There are the dives done by competitive swimmers at the start of a race, where the aim is to travel further, rather than deeper. But if you're learning to dive you're looking at the one- or three-metre springboards, or the five-, 7.5- or 10-metre-high platforms that to climb, let alone jump, was a test of childhood fearlessness.

Diving is about keeping your cool: it's lonely up on that platform. And it's about control: a misplaced limb can bring you smacking down on the water. The aim is to enter the water as cleanly as possible (for this reason, you're better off in a streamlined swimsuit than a bikini: diving and frilly bits are not friends). Take lessons and you'll progress to pikes (where you bend at your hips), then somersaults. You'll also go higher as you get better, giving you more time to execute Tom Daley-esque moves. Not *much* more: from a 10-metre platform, you'll be in the air about three seconds.

Diving is not the most forgiving of new hobbies. There's certain to be a pool full of swimmers to witness your early, painful efforts. But one precisely executed dive, the rush of the air before the plunge into the water, and you'll be the proudest person in that pool.

To find an instructor near you visit
www.swimming.org/poolfinder



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CAKE IN THE HOUSE

This nutty, light cake is perfect for scattering with summer fruits. Some will sink in and some will rest on top. If you want a less sweet cake, leave out the rose water icing

SUMMER SPELT ALMOND CAKE

Makes one 23cm cake (8-10 slices)

FOR THE SPONGE

175g butter, softened, plus more for greasing the tin
175g light brown sugar
2 eggs
¼ vanilla pod, seeds scraped out
125g ground almonds
175g wholemeal spelt flour
2 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
200g halved cherries, or whole raspberries or blueberries
200g peaches or nectarines, sliced
2 tbsp caster sugar, for sprinkling
rose petals, for scattering (optional)

FOR THE ICING (OPTIONAL)

200g icing sugar
1-2 tbsp rose water

- 1 Preheat the oven to 160/Fan 140/320F. Butter a 23cm cake tin and line with parchment paper.
- 2 In the bowl of an electric mixer, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each one. Add the vanilla seeds. Add the almonds and mix to combine.
- 3 In another bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder and salt, then gently beat these into the creamed butter mixture. The mixture will be rather stiff but that's OK.
- 4 Spread the batter into your prepared cake tin and smooth top with a palette knife. Scatter the cherries (or raspberries or blueberries) over the batter, then press the slices of peach (or nectarine) on top to get the fruit inside the cake batter a bit.
- 5 Sprinkle with the caster sugar and bake for 60-70 mins, until a skewer comes out clean and the top is springy. Let the cake cool for 15 mins before turning it out.
- 6 If using the icing, whisk the rose water into the icing sugar until smooth and runny. Drizzle over the cooled cake. Scatter with garden rose petals if you have them. This is best eaten on the same day you bake it.





1pm



11am

My day in cups of tea

WE ASKED ROO CROSS, OF ROO'S BEACH IN CORNWALL, TO DESCRIBE HER DAY IN CUPPAS



ROO'S BEACH

Roo Cross is the founder of Roo's Beach, a beachside boutique on the north coast of Cornwall specialising in happy and colourful fashion and lifestyle products from around the globe. www.roosbeach.co.uk

Morning! Where are you waking up?

Mawgan Porth on the north Cornwall coast. We moved here four years ago and we're very lucky to live overlooking the sea. With three teenagers, the open-plan kitchen, dining and living room is always busy. I'll have a cuppa here, but breakfast usually waits until I get to the office.

Is that a lengthy wait?

It's a beautiful 10-minute drive along the coast. I'm able to give a full surf report to my husband and son en route.

And then breakfast?

Yes, with a second cuppa while getting a handle on what I have to do: a mixture of buying, working on photo shoots, serving in the shop, sorting stock, planning events and so on. We're all very hands on. We're also building a café outside the shop; I think it'll become a real community hub.

Meanwhile, what do you do for lunch?

In summer, we just cross the road and sit on the

beach. I try to catch up with what's happening on Instagram or inspirational blogs such as www.alexfultondesign.com (a New Zealand-based interior designer), www.theelginavenue.com (a Hampshire fashion blogger) and www.anthropologie.com – such a beautiful shop!

What do you love most about your job?

Discovering beautiful items and bringing them together in one space. I really enjoy being in the shop and sharing my passion with our customers. We've embraced the term #HappyClothes, as we believe we sell clothes that make people smile.

Let's really make you smile: how about a drink and a snack?

Mid-afternoon is when I need a herbal tea as a pick-me-up, with a couple of squares of very dark chocolate. I don't really have cakes or biscuits.

That's very virtuous of you...

Well... I'm much more of a crisps and gin and tonic sort of girl! ☺



MILK MADE

CREAMY RICOTTA IS THE PERFECT VEHICLE FOR SEASONAL GARDEN HERBS. MAKE IT, THEN BAKE IT, WITH THESE RECIPES FROM YEO VALLEY

Yeo Valley's farm in Blagdon, Somerset, has a six-and-a-half-acre organic garden, producing delicious herbs and vegetables; and the location at the foot of the Mendip Hills means the hedgerows make a natural larder. Here their chefs share a dish inspired by the milk from their British Friesian cows.

Somerset style ricotta

2.25l whole milk
250ml double cream
½ tsp salt
4 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

Equipment

Large sieve, fine muslin

Makes approx 600g

1 Line a large sieve with a layer of damp fine muslin.

2 Put the milk in a pan with the cream and salt, place over a medium-low heat and heat slowly to 93C, occasionally stirring gently.

3 When it reaches the right temperature the milk will steam and the surface shimmers with some small bubbles.

4 Take the pan off the heat and stir in the lemon juice for a few seconds until curds start to form.

5 Leave undisturbed for 2 mins then, using a slotted spoon, gently ladle the curds into the sieve, taking care not to break them up.

6 Drain until the ricotta reaches the desired consistency. Refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Baked ricotta with herbs

350g fresh ricotta

3 eggs, divided into yolks and whites

1 tbsp thyme, chopped

1 small lemon (for finely grated zest)

25g mature cheddar, finely grated salt, pepper and herbs for seasoning

Equipment

4-6 new terracotta flowerpots (8-9cm) baking paper

1 Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Fan 160. Line

the pots with baking paper.

2 Mix the ricotta with the egg yolks, thyme, lemon zest and cheddar and season to taste.

3 Whisk the egg whites into soft peaks and gently fold in.

4 Spoon the mixture into the pots and bake for 20-25 mins until puffed up and golden.

5 Serve warm with toasted bread.

Make it your own

We like to make this recipe with ransoms – wild garlic (above) – in season, and even some fresh cherry tomatoes. It's just as lovely with thyme, rosemary, or your own pick from your garden.

Random fact

Baby blue whales can live for up to five years on their mother's milk alone – it really is packed with goodness.





A scenic landscape with rolling green hills and a dirt road. In the foreground, a person's hand is visible, holding a small, round, light-colored object. The background features a large, leafy tree and distant, hazy mountains under a bright sky.

JULY

ESCAPE

FANCY A ROAD TRIP? WE COULD CATCH SOME
ICELANDIC SUN, CLAMBER ON A BUS, CAMP
ON A REMOTE SHORE OR RUMMAGE IN A FLEA
MARKET. UP FOR IT? HOP IN...



MY CITY*: REYKJAVÍK

JENNA GOTTLIEB TAKES US ON A TOUR OF ICELAND'S CAPITAL,
FULL OF QUIRKY RECORD SHOPS, BOOKSTORES AND MUSEUMS





JENNA GOTTLIEB

Jenna is a full-time freelance journalist from New York City, happily residing in Iceland with her husband, Bjorn Ludvíksson, who took these photos. She writes about culture, travel and business. Her website is www.jennagottlieb.com

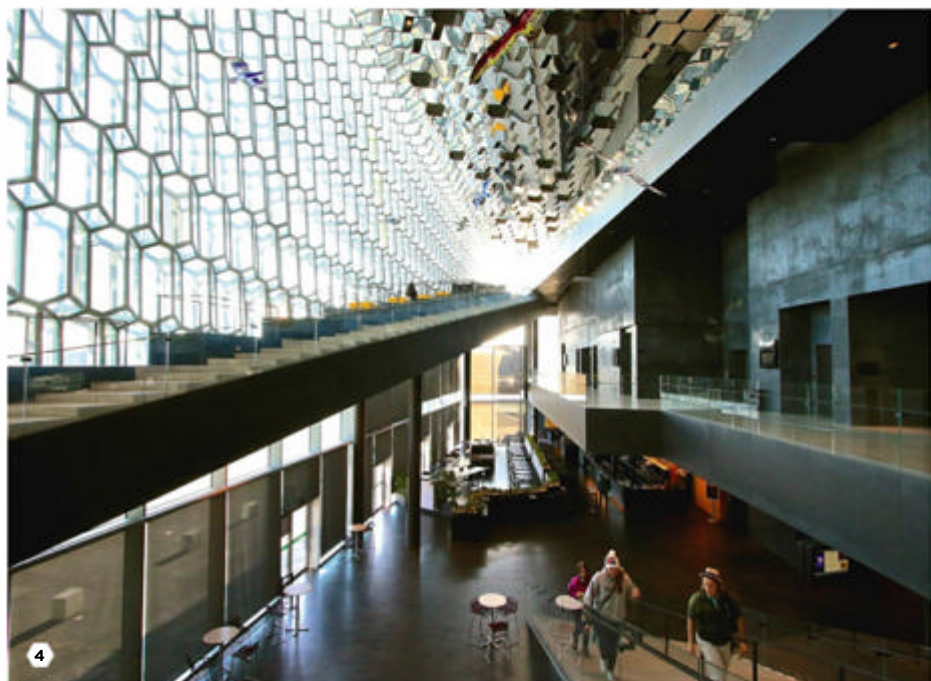
***There's no better way to get to the heart of a city than through the people that live there. Every month we ask someone, clearly in love with their city, to take us on a personal tour and tell us what makes it so special. You may feel inspired to visit one day or to rediscover the charms of a city closer to you, but for now just sit back, relax and enjoy some armchair travel.**

How long have you lived in Reykjavík?

I've lived here for three years. I'm originally from New York City and I moved to Iceland because I fell in love with, and married, a Viking. Living in New York wasn't an option for my husband as he's used to quiet, small-town life and New York is a bit overwhelming for some. Fortunately, I love Iceland and it's been fantastic making a life here.

Tell us what makes it unique.

Even though it's such a small city, with around 200,000 people living in the greater Reykjavík area, its creativity rivals that of much larger cities. There's a deep-seated love of literature, art and music that's reflected in the number of bookshops, record stores and museums. The small population means that you constantly run into people you know. Also, it's a safe, clean city with great culture and the countryside is just a short drive away,



- ❶ Harpa concert hall, with the snow-capped mountains beyond
- ❷ Summer blooms attract the crowds near parliament house
- ❸ The kitsch, downtown Café Babalú
- ❹ Inside the buzzing musical hub of Harpa concert hall
- ❺ Lucky Records sells a huge range of music on vinyl and CD

where you can hike, bathe in hot springs and find new towns to explore.

What is it like in July?

Everything is alive. We endure long winters in Iceland and summer is the pay-off. It's the greenest time of year, when we have the best weather – the flowers bloom, grass crops up and trees gently sway in the light breeze. Locals try to be outdoors as much as possible when the weather is pleasant and that can mean everything from riding bikes along the coast to enjoying an alfresco beer.

What time of day do you most enjoy?

The days are long in the summer and it's really special to have so much daylight. My favourite time is being outside, taking a walk underneath the midnight sun. For some, 24-hour daylight is strange, much like our dark winters, but it's actually really beautiful – as long as you have »



“For some, 24-hour daylight is strange, but it’s really beautiful”

heavy bedroom curtains to block out the sun so that you can get some sleep.

Tell us about the natural attractions.

Reykjavík is surrounded by gorgeous ocean coasts and towering mountains, the closest being Mount Esja, which stands at 914m. Long winters mean that the mountains are snow-capped for most of the year. However, once summer arrives, the city and countryside awakens, with bright green grass dotted with flowers and plants. Nature waits just outside the city centre, where you find horses and sheep grazing and well-maintained hiking trails.

Where’s your favourite outdoor space?

It has to be the pond, *Tjörnin*, next to city hall. Here you find people riding bikes, enjoying a coffee on a benches and feeding the ducks and swans.

Where do you go in summer?

One of my favourite spots is the top of Hallgrímskirkja, the church in the heart of downtown Reykjavík. It overlooks all the colourful houses below. On sunny days, the natural light is warm and welcoming, even when temperatures dip into single digits.

Tell us about the people who live in Reykjavík.

Icelanders can come across as shy, but they warm up once they get to know you. Many Icelanders have a deep love of nature and like to be outdoors. With tourism booming, locals are curious to know why travellers have chosen their city to visit, and visitors will find that Icelanders are proud of their country and their heritage.

Where are your favourite places to gather with friends and family?

The coffeehouse scene is great here. One of my favourites is Café Babalú, which has a bright orange exterior and two levels indoors. There’s an outdoor deck that locals and tourists enjoy on sunny summer days. Mokka-Kaffi, which is the oldest coffeehouse in Reykjavík, is another great spot; they serve delicious coffee and dynamite waffles with fresh cream and jam. I also love to meet up with friends to browse the record shops in town. Two of the best are 12 Tónar and Lucky Records, where you can listen to records and CDs before you buy.

What’s the food like?

It’s no surprise that seafood is a staple in Iceland. There are so many great places to try local cod, haddock, lobster and salmon. Lamb is also a big part of the Icelandic diet and some great places to check out local cuisine are Fiskfélagið (Fish Company), Grillmarkaðurinn (Grillmarket), and Sægreifinn (Seabaron). Icelandic bakeries are also fantastic and Sandholt is one of my



2



4

favourites places to grab a *kleinur* (Icelandic donut) and coffee.

What's your favourite way to get around?

It's a great walking city. Everything is just a stroll away – grocery stores, coffee houses, bars, bookshops and music venues. When the temperatures dip and I need to get somewhere more quickly, my bicycle is my go-to ride.

What kinds of shops do you most like to visit?

I feel at home in bookshops. There are quite a few here, where you can browse everything from exquisite photo books of Iceland to Icelandic literature (with quite a few titles translated into English, German and Scandinavian languages). I also love the local design scene and there are cool shops such as Aurum, Hrim and Kraum, where you can find design treasures ranging from scarves to letterpress cards to home goods. The Handknitting Association of Iceland is the place to buy woollen clothes and skeins of lopi wool for knitting projects.

Where do you like to escape to?

Seltjarnarnes, in the west part of town, is an area with a



3



5

- 1 Street art in downtown Reykjavik
- 2 Good set of pipes: Hallgrímskirkja church's splendid organ and high ceilings
- 3 Take the coast road through the harbour to see another side of Reykjavik
- 4 An artistic take on a house number
- 5 Outdoor sculptures at sunset

lovely lighthouse. The surrounding area is perfect for an afternoon bike ride, walk along the coast or to check out the birdlife in the area. It's a hidden gem.

What has been your best discovery?

The local music scene is surprising and exhilarating. There's a running joke that everyone in Iceland is a musician – and sometimes it really seems believable. There are so many bands for such a small population and there's a lot more to Icelandic music than Björk and Sigur Rós. There are so many local acts to check out, including Mugison, Amiina, Retro Stefson, Apparat Organ Quartet »



- ❶ Jón Gunnar Árnason's Sun Voyager sculpture, near the harbour
- ❷ The long hours of daylight in summer bring out the blooms
- ❸ Hallgrímskirkja church; there are stunning views of the city from the top of the tower



and Olafur Arnalds, among others. Some venues to explore include Lucky Records, Húrra and Harpa.

What do you miss most if you've been away?

The slow pace of the city. In New York, everyone is always in a rush – to catch the train, get to work or even just to meet friends. But, Reykjavík is just so laid back. It's been a great change of pace for this harried New Yorker.


What would surprise a newcomer to your city?

How small it is. While most locals have cars, it's very easy to get around by foot and bike.

If you could change one thing about the city, what would it be?

I suppose it would be the shops staying open later. It's possible to find everything you need in New York in less than 10 minutes. In Reykjavík, most shops close at 6pm.

Where would you like to live if you couldn't live here?

I'd love to see Helsinki, Berlin and Tokyo. But my life and love are here, so I don't see myself living anywhere else. 

JENNA'S PERSONAL TOUR

FAVOURITE SHOP

12 Tónar

Skólavörðustíg 15, Reykjavík
Iceland has so many great bands, and quite a few good record shops. 12 Tónar is my favourite, as you're welcome to listen to new releases while enjoying a free cup of coffee.
www.12tonar.is

GALLERIES

Spark Design Space

Klapparstígur 33
The only Reykjavík gallery dedicated to product design and a lovely spot to check out cool local design wares.
www.sparkdesignspace.com

FAVOURITE CAFÉ OR BAR

Café Babalu

Skólavörðustígur 22A
With a bright orange exterior and kitschy inside, this is a great place to stop for a coffee, cake or even fresh crêpes.
www.babalu.is

FAVOURITE RESTAURANT

Taco Barinn

Hverfisgata 20
Relatively new on the restaurant scene, Tacobarinn serves up delicious tacos using fresh local ingredients, including salmon and lamb.
www.facebook.com/Tacobarinn

FAVOURITE HOTEL

Hótel Frón

Laugavegur 22A
Hótel Frón is not just special because of its fantastic location, but it's comfortable and relatively easy on the wallet.
www.hotelfron.is

BEST VIEW

Hallgrímskirkja church

Skólavörðustígur 101
Hallgrímskirkja is a striking sight from the outside, but visitors can go to the top of the church for an unbelievable view of the city.

ONE THING YOU MUST SEE

Tjörnin

Visitors shouldn't miss a walk around Tjörnin (the pond) in the centre of town. It's a lovely spot to stretch your legs and feed the ducks.

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SHERBET

Photography: **MOWIE KAY** Words: **RACHAEL OAKDEN**

IF THE OTTOMAN TURKS hadn't invented soft drinks, somebody else would have. In a hot climate it doesn't take a massive stretch of the imagination to think of flavouring water with fruit, flower petals, herbs or spices and serving it over ice. But the idea of the world's first fruit cordials, or sherbets (*şerbet* in Turkish or *sharbat* in Persian), having been served in the palaces of Constantinople is a beguiling one: the image of rose-scented lemonade being sipped by a sultan from cut-glass elevates this simple iced drink into an exotic refreshment.

"Give me a sun, I care not how hot, and sherbet, I care not how cool, and my Heaven is as easily made as your Persian's." So Lord Byron wrote in 1813, after sampling sherbets on a visit to what is now Istanbul. At least 300 sherbet recipes are believed to have been recorded there, based on fruits (black mulberries, sour cherries, pomegranate), flowers (violet, orange blossom, rose), spices (tamarind, ginger, cloves), and even seeds and grains such as chia and teff. They usually took the form of syrups or dried sugar tablets, which lasted longer than fresh fruit and could be diluted when needed. These spread into Europe via Venice, the syrups becoming sorbets and the sherbet cakes the fizzy sweet still loved in Britain today*.

The fizzy lure of western pop superseded sherbet's popularity in the later 20th century, although it's still served as an aperitif to Ottoman cuisine in the Turkish capital, and at feasts and celebrations across Muslim cultures, such as *Iftar* (the fast-breaking evening meal of Ramadan). If you want to try a simple recipe at home, all you need are unwaxed lemons, ice cubes and a dash of rosewater. Byron's blazing sunshine may be harder to come by.

TUCK IN: Try watermelon and passion fruit sharbats at Dishoom, in London's Shoreditch, Covent Garden and King's Cross. (www.dishoom.com, 020 7420 9324).

**Usually served with a liquorice stick in a soggy cardboard tube.*







UNDER CANVAS

BEAUTIFUL CAMPSITES,
THE SMART WAY TO PACK
AND AN IRRESISTIBLE
PIE-SANDWICH COMBO

THREE COOL CAMPSITES that are worth the journey

Whether you take a plane, train or automobile, getting to these campsites is all part of the holiday. Here are three sites where the journey is as important as the destination, selected by James Warner Smith at Cool Camping

1 CAMPING LA CASCADE, FRANCE

You'd better take a jaw-sling with you when driving to La Cascade along the Gorges de la Jonte. Because if the views along this scenic chasm (especially the part between Le Rozier and Meyrueis) don't make the lower half of your face succumb to the force of awe-inspired gravity, then the fantastic atmosphere at the campsite will. Slightly away from the gorge itself, positioned at an altitude of 2,460 feet, this 50-pitch paradise is split between two main fields (plus a couple in a delightful hidden area next to a stream). Wherever you pitch your tent you're gifted ample space and exquisite views, either of the handsome limestone shelf of Causse Méjean or the fresh,

towering pines on the other side.
www.camping-la-cascade.com/fr/

2 WATERCRESS LODGES AND CAMPSITE, HAMPSHIRE

There's nowhere better to step into the storybook scenery of Thomas the Tank Engine than Watercress Lodges and Campsite in rural Hampshire. Just a few yards from Ropley Station platform on the famous Watercress Line Railway, the campsite is a train spotter's paradise. In the mornings it's the choo-choo of steam engines that drags you from your pillow and, when the wind is in the right direction, wafts of white wispy steam even drift through the camping field. Opened for the

WISE WORDS

Packing lighter

Camping is all about cutting clutter out of life. So break free from your screen addiction and leave the plastic at home. There's nothing worse than packing the car like a game of luggage Tetris, only to return with most things completely unused. Before you leave, check what's provided on-site, so you don't bring unnecessary items, and enjoy eating local food rather than travelling to the continent with a truckload of cheddar, Marmite and teabags. Certainly you can, if you are very well organised, equip children with a torch and a backpack full of toys, but they'll likely lose the lot when they get out of the car and on a campsite it's mud, water and animals that keep them busy. Keep it simple and practical – that way you'll get a little extra legroom in the car.

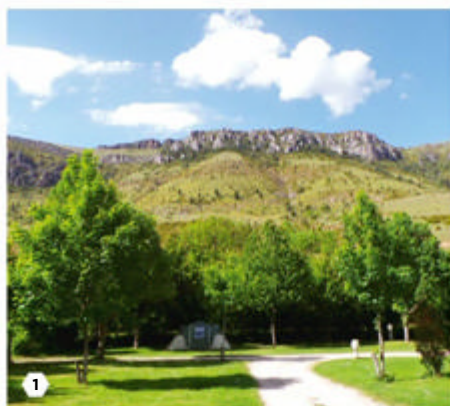


Eating out

by ALI RAY

The Picnic Loaf

Half sandwich, half pie, this picnic loaf crams the best of the local farm shop into one easy-to-carry meal. Prepare it the night before so the flavours have time to soak in. You can chop and change the ingredients according to what's available. Find the recipe at www.thesimplethings.com/blog/picnicloaf and read more in *Pitch Up Eat Local* by Ali Ray (£16.99, AA Publishing).



first time in 2014, the facilities are clean, modern and built with families in mind, including a baby changing space and full disabled access, perfectly mixing the new with the old at this historic station-side spot. www.watercresslodges.co.uk

3 TROYTOWN CAMPSITE, ISLES OF SCILLY

If camping on the tiny island of St Agnes isn't exciting enough, it's certainly an adventure getting there. Take your pick



from a boat or plane for the journey to one of the Isles of Scilly's two main islands, St Mary's, and then on to a catamaran for the trip to St Agnes. If it's a bright day, you'll be greeted by the almost Mediterranean sight of boats moored on the turquoise waters of Porth Conger. Next is a tractor ride – for your luggage at least. Most people let their bags go ahead and walk the 20 minutes to the Troytown Farm, England's westernmost campsite. Its position couldn't be any more remote or spectacular. Clinging to the



western foreshore of the island, just feet away from the rock-calmed Atlantic waters, it's sandwiched between beautiful Periglis Beach on one side and bold, intriguing rock formations on the other. www.troytown.co.uk

You can read more on these and many other campsites and buy the new editions of *Cool Camping Britain* and *Cool Camping Europe* at www.coolcamping.co.uk.



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LIFE COACH

WHETHER YOU PLAY 'CHARABANC ROULETTE' AND GO WHERE FATE TAKES YOU, OR TAKE A SLOW CHUG IN A VINTAGE VEHICLE, LIFE LOOKS DIFFERENT FROM THE DECK OF A BUS. JULIAN OWEN GETS ON BOARD

Bus and coach travel as an adult divides into three stages. The first lasts for three years and is called Being A Student. The last begins with a free bus pass and continues for as long as the good lord sees fit. In the middle is by far the biggest portion: four decades of seeing countless buses but never actually riding one. Well, we're about to change that.

First, though, let's establish what went wrong. Deep down, we've always known bus travel is sexy. Hollywood told us all about America's Greyhound buses, tubes of brushed aluminium dripping in romantic road trip culture, the name redolent of sleek swiftness, bounding between Chicago and Los Angeles, New Orleans and New York.

Where I grew up we had Badgerline: overgrown minibuses garnished in garish green and yellow, groaning under the weight of tartan shopping trolleys. It's probably an act of mercy that history does not record exactly who had the idea of naming a bus fleet after an animal so seldom seen. Unless, of course, it is involved in road-based mishap.

EVERY DAY'S A SCHOOL DAY

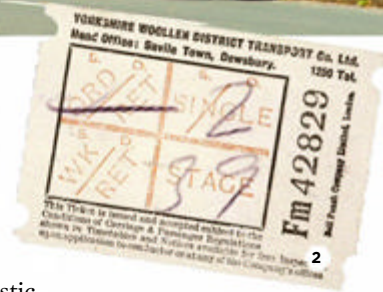
School coach trips hardly helped the allure. "Don't sit over the wheel!" rang the cry, imbued with an urgency once reserved for warning of approaching plague-carriers. Then there was the segregation. Seats near the door for the swots, middle for the kids with waving parents praying their offspring might aspire to be more like the kids in front, as they sat wishing they were cool enough to join those slouching behind. Sitting at the back practically screamed "Expulsion? Whatever. Got a light?"

So much for the past. It's time to kick those memories to the kerb and climb



aboard a bright new future. It used to be Concorde that dipped its nose, and even then only for millionaires. Modern buses bow to pavement level for everyone. Furthermore, they are bedecked in voluptuous curvy plastic and high-back seating, are lit soft with LEDs, and offer free wi-fi.

Yet the romance of buses has nothing to do with mod cons. It's all a question of attitude. Don't get us wrong, we fully appreciate that flagging down a night bus to Santa Monica on Route 66 is at quite some remove from standing beside the B5164 for the number 47 from Steeple Draycott to Lower Wallop. But the fundamentals still apply: to step aboard a bus is to hand the dice of life to fate and ask that it roll. Who will you find beyond the perilously piled carrier bags and scattering of buggies? The old flame for whom your heart never quite »



- 1 A vintage coach stops in Hutton le Hole in the North Yorkshire Moors
- 2 There's something satisfying about tucking an old-fashioned cardboard bus ticket into your wallet – none of your contactless payment here, please



Top bus songs*

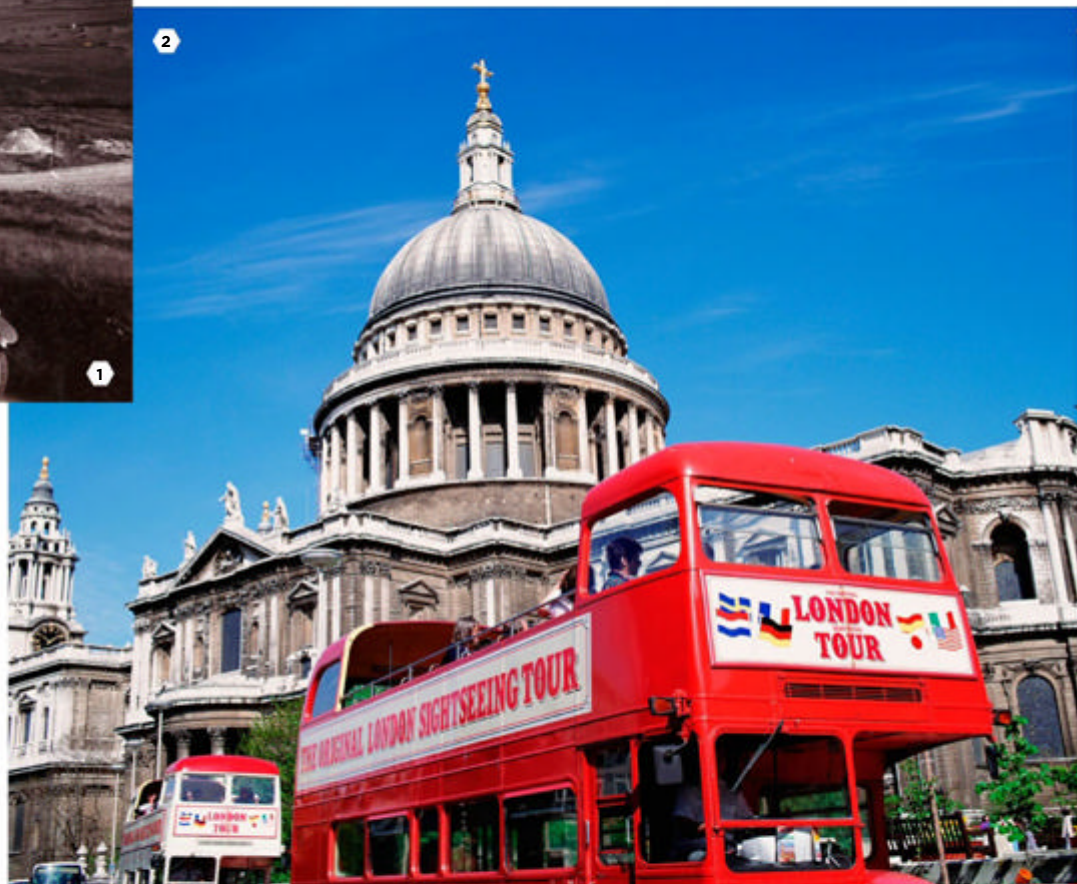
Wheels on the Bus Trad.

'Arranged by' every schoolchild who ever sat on a bus.

National Express The Divine Comedy. "All human life is here," sings Neil Hannon, wisely.

Get on the Bus Destiny's Child. The sound of Beyoncé clearing the way for Jay Z. For maximum bus chic, play loudly through phone, sans headphones.

Hail to the Busdriver Anon. American folk song, popularised by *The Simpsons*. Begins "Hail to the bus driver, bus driver-man" before going on to admiringly list a series of habits unlikely to impress any bus driver licensing authority.



stopped smouldering? The dishy organic butcher to whom you've never managed to say more than "Half a kilo of shin, please"? No one at all? No matter – just show your ticket to the driver and behold our failsafe guide for maximum voyaging delight.

DIY MYSTERY TOUR

Perhaps you are neither student nor OAP and yet regularly commute by bus. But while you're sitting gathering your thoughts for the early morning meeting, it is the other two groups getting all the fun, hopping aboard to demand a ticket to Pleasureville. So, come your next day off, reclaim your route. No longer shall it be synonymous with toil. Today you are going to open up a whole new horizon by making good on a promise you've often made to yourself, and riding to the end of the line. Don't check to see what's there first: simply

pack some in-case-of-emergency sandwiches, wait for the driver to say "all change," and get to exploring. Almost any size of place will have a local museum, the smaller very often the better: the lower the visitor numbers, the higher the chance of staff delighted at the opportunity to share the full benefit of their knowledge. Other gems uncovered by your correspondent utilising this low-key adventure technique include abandoned-but-stunning art deco factories, a homely cinema serving tea in china cups, and many a faded glory seaside resort bathed in a charm beyond the reach of more fashionable destinations.

HOMETOWN REMIX

At the age of 15, I undertook a week's work experience in the attic room of a former Georgian townhouse. It taught me many lessons, none longer lasting than one provoked by five short, haltingly delivered words that floated through the window on the quarter-hour: "But he never became king." 160 times I heard this asserted, 160 times I didn't learn to whom it pertained. It drove me spare. Thus, the lesson: historical bus tours are not just for holidays. The 161st

"Try a little charabanc roulette: close your eyes, prick a timetable with a pin and let chance be your travel guide"



Top bus games

Transit soap opera

A game in limitless parts. Sit at the back of the bus, give each brace of seats a number, and unfurl your imagination. Hmm... that couple at number ten don't seem very happy. Is it the way she's looking at the vicar as he tests the firmness of his avocado? And what about the pretty young thing next to him. Is she... pregnant?! For most effective results, repeat the journey at the same time on a frequent basis, and establish your regular characters. Keep a diary, repeat a few times, and Sunday supplement column potential is yours.


Bus Journal

Cards on table, we were quite taken with the soap opera idea. Then we discovered something similar but better already in existence: Bus Journal. The idea is still looking for a publisher but sounds ace: photographers, artists, writers, all asked to bus around a pre-ordained city and record their observations of everyday life. First up, Istanbul. www.sarahledonne.com/work/bus-journal



zippily peeling bell; truly invigorating air conditioning (aka fully opening windows, or even split-screen windscreen); best of all, a conductor. As youngsters gather near the driver, pressing their palms against his isolation booth and wondering how to pay him, gently explain that the immaculately dressed chap cheerily making his way down the aisle will take care of that. Then hit the road, and marvel at how fast buses are these days. Not like this lovable old workhorse, slowly making its way along the road with stoic determination. Welcome to life in the slow lane, where vistas pass by more slowly, and the mind unwinds more fully. Just don't sit over the wheel.

CHARABANC ROULETTE

A few variations on the DIY mystery tour, each offering low-cost, no-planning days out: if already familiar with the end of the line, try a little charabanc roulette: close your eyes, prick a timetable with a pin and let chance be your travel guide. Remember, part of the joy of local bussing is that, even if you regularly drive the direct route from A to B, the winding nature of public transport routes determines that you're likely to discover wholly new places within five or ten miles of home. This needn't merely be countryside adventuring, of course: in metropolitan world, pick a bus you've never been on – you know, the one that always seems to arrive before yours – and discover areas you barely knew existed. Opting for double-deckers whenever possible multiplies the 'previously unseen' factor. And bag the front seat as soon as it comes up for an unimpeded view. 

time I heard them I was out there on an open top deck. I not only identified the unfortunate non-monarch (George II's estranged eldest, Frederick), but saw my hometown in a vivid new light. History books are grand, but nothing cements sense of place more lastingly than the immediacy of "that's the window the novelist gazed from," or "that's where the scandal-ruined politician met the milkmaid," and so forth.

TRIP BACK IN TIME

Make like a Maeve Binchy heroine and meander wistfully through winding country lanes aboard a vintage bus. There are dozens of olde worlde specialists across the country, each running services packed with yesteryear delights: chrome-trimmed 'push once' presses operating a proper,

- 1 Put your hands in the air if you want to go faster! A 1930s charabanc outing. Slow but so much fun
- 2 The only way to see the sights in London – from the top of a cheery red routemaster
- 3 Next stop, the Village Green
- 4 Great for views, less great for your shampoo and set. An open-topped bus ride along the Bournemouth coast

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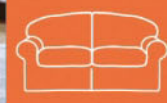
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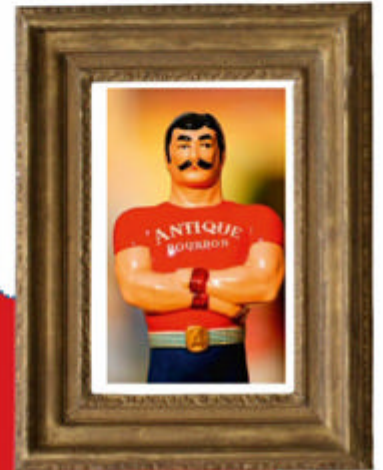
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BONNES BROCANTES

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ARE ON A DIFFERENT
LEVEL TO THE BRITISH
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FLEA FOSSICKERS WITH
TREASURE TROVES OF
FRENCH FINDS

Words: **RUTH TIERNEY**





From enamel signs and watches to leather goods and antique gardening tools, all of human life – and the contents of its attic – is here, and on sale



If there's one thing the French excel at, it's flea markets. They're big, they're cheap, they're chic, and they're packed full of treasures like wine crates and linen sheets that you just don't come across at your average UK car boot sale.

And right now, it's flea market central on the continent, as *brocantes* (also known as *braderies* and *rederies*) take over villages, towns and cities between April and October, ranging from 15 stalls to 15,000. Bargain-hunting is a weekend obsession, and the pickings are rich.

"The French tend to hang onto stuff for years. They don't move as often as us, and they have more storage space, with cellars, attics and outbuildings," explains *braderie* expert Jane Gratton, who spends five months of the year bargain-hunting in Burgundy, selling her finds on the website Simply French Vintage

THE BEST BROCANTES Lille

La Grande Braderie de Lille is a beast of a *brocante*, the biggest in Europe, lasting two days, spanning 62 miles, and attracting 15,000 vendors and two million visitors.

The first day, Saturday, is best for bargains, but trading doesn't officially kick off until 3pm (although we found several hawkers willing to take our money before then, including one who sold me a vintage Chanel skirt for €10).

Savvy shoppers tend to avoid the main drags, where cheap, modern clothes and electronics are sold, and instead head for the bric-a-brac stalls in the winding back streets. The *Façade de l'Esplanade*, where rows of stalls line up alongside Lille's ancient canal, is also a good hunting ground. We discovered ornate frames, zinc lettering and lots of industrial-chic furniture there.

Lille is just over an hour's drive from Calais, but the city-centre roads are closed so you will have to park outside and get the Metro in.

This year the braderie takes place on 5 and 6 September. Accommodation gets booked up months in advance, so make it a day trip or find somewhere to stay in neighbouring Béthune.

"The French hang onto stuff for years... When they have a clear-out their whole life is on the stall"

Fail-safe French phrases

How much? *Combien?*

What is your best price?

Quelle est votre meilleur prix?

Can you go a little lower?

Pouvez-vous baisser le prix?

How old is it?

C'est de quelle période?

Do you have a bag/some bubblewrap, please?

Avez-vous un sac/papier bulle, s'il vous plaît?

(www.simplyfrenchvintage.com). "When they do decide to have a clear-out, their whole life is on the stall. I've seen 1950s wedding presents."

Because there is really no such thing as a charity shop in France, when people inherit items they sell them at a *brocante* rather than donating. Jane says, "I bought lengths of pristine 1960s floral material from a man who'd just cleared out the house of his late aunt, a Parisian couturier."

It goes without saying that you have to rummage through a lot of tat before you find the treasure, but then that's half the fun.

Amiens

Every spring and autumn, the Rederie d'Amiens takes over this Picardy city. Some 2,500 traders occupy 51 streets, with more than 80,000 visitors vying for their wares. If vintage metal lights, wooden picnic benches and enamel advertising signs are your thing, you'll be in heaven. Amiens is around an hour's drive from Calais and parking is free and relatively easy on the outskirts (we found space at the Parking du Coliseum).

The next fair takes place on 3 October, and when we went to press there were still several hotel options available in Amiens. Next spring's fair is on 17 April.

Tours

On the first Sunday in September, the Grande Braderie takes over the whole town with 1,200 stalls to browse. Last year I bought gorgeous old Ricard bottles, enamel coffee pots and candlesticks, and a vintage cashmere cardigan, all for €5–€10 each.

It kicks off at 8am on the Boulevard Béranger. Hotels in Tours, which is on the Loire, are selling out fast for this September, so book ahead for September 2016. Alternatively, there's the regular flea market on the first Sunday of each month, with around 150 stalls.

Rennes

Another biggie, the Grande Braderie du Canal St Martin takes place in the Breton capital on the third Saturday of September, where you will find 3,500 stalls of vintage gems. Join 150,000 bargain-hunters alongside pretty towpaths where, from 6am, you'll find everything from local Quimper pottery to traditional metal bottle-drying racks. There were still plenty of local hotel options as we went to press.

Nice

A more glamorous location would be hard to find. Every Monday from 7am to mid-afternoon, 200 stalls pop up along the Cours Saleya. As you'd expect in such a chic city, prices aren't cheap but you may spot a bargain by rummaging through the piles of jumble on the pavement in the adjacent Place Pierre Gauthier. As well as French wares, you will find items from nearby Italy and Monaco, including jewellery, ceramics, posters and silverware.



“You have to rummage through a lot of tat before you find the treasure, but that’s half the fun”

Les Andelys

This is the 50th year of the large Foire a Tout flea market in the Normandy town of Les Andelys, on 12 and 13 September. Around 800 stalls cover 7.2km along the leafy Avenue de la République and adjacent streets. It's a mix of professional antique dealers and families who've had an attic clear-out, so there are bargains to be had.

With only a handful of hotels in this tiny town, why not stay in Rouen, 25km to the north, where you can also visit the huge indoor antique fair Les Puces Rouennaises at the Parc Expo on the same weekend? Hotel rooms were still plentiful when we looked.

Lyon

One of the biggest weekly *brocantes* in France, Villeurbanne's Les Puces du Canal is held on the outskirts of the city every Sunday. Around 400 stalls pack the streets selling vintage kitchenware (this is the gastro capital of France after all), rustic and retro furniture, copperware and glass. Look out for items with Rhône-Alpes history, such as chocolate moulds and wooden spindles from the textile industry. Prices are reasonable and trade is brisk, so get there early doors (it starts at 7am). »

Need to know...

- To find smaller *brocantes*, visit www.vide-greniers.org and www.brocabrac.fr.
- Take plenty of euros. Stall-holders with card machines are rare, and it's much easier to barter with hard cash.
- Get a five-day forecast. Smaller *brocantes* are weather permitting.
- There are no restrictions on how much you can bring back via the Eurotunnel but if you're bringing back commercial products for resale in a van, you'll need to book in with their 'Freight' service.
- If you're flying or on Eurostar, large goods can always be posted back. It's not cheap but www.parcel2go.com is a good way to view international shipping options.



WHAT TO BUY

Brocantes expert Jane Gratton reveals gems you might find:

● **Street signs.** Old blue and white enamel street signs often crop up, and usually cost between €10 and €80 (£7–£58). In the UK you'd pay around £100.

● **Tin baths.** Tin and zinc baths are popular as planters, and are common in French flea markets where you'll pay between €15 and €20 (£11–£14.50). In the UK you'd be looking at £30 to £40.

● **Wooden wine crates.** Rustic boxes with French lettering on the side are particularly common in wine regions like Burgundy, and cost around €15 (£11). In the UK you'd pay between £30 and £40.

● **Enamelware.** Metal pitchers and coffee pots are plentiful. You can pay anything from €5 to €20 (£3.60 to £14.50), while they'd set you back around £30 in the UK.

● **Linen sheets.** Beautiful French linen sheets are becoming harder to find as people snap them up to use as tablecloths. Expect to pay €20 (£14.50) in France, and £40–£50 in the UK.

READY FOR THE REDERIE

A trip to Amiens

VINTAGE CLOTHING FAN RUTH TIERNEY MADE SOME EXCITING FINDS



OKAY, WE DIDN'T QUITE crawl out of bed in time for the 5am grand opening (blame the local wine for that!) but when we did emerge from our hotel in nearby Abbeville at 7am, stallholders on the outer edges were still setting up so we didn't miss all of the bargains.

I had my eyes peeled for vintage fabrics. My husband Chris collects records, so made a beeline for boxes of vinyl. We'd come prepared with roomy bags, euros and plenty of water. The joy of driving to these flea markets (Amiens is just over an hour from Calais) is that you can load your car with finds, without having to worry about luggage

restrictions on planes and trains.

The sheer scale of the market is daunting and exciting. Some of the 2,500 stalls were manned by professionals, others were clearly locals who'd had a declutter. On trestle tables, blankets, bonnets of cars and peeping from cardboard boxes, were all manner of curios. As I made my first purchase, a cute 1970s floral blouse for €5 (£3.65), an English woman paid €80 for a stuffed pheasant. A few streets along, I came across a van with two rails of pristine 1950s and 1960s dresses, including a beautiful hessian wiggle dress embroidered with tiny pastel buds (left).

"The joy of driving... is you can load your car with finds with no worries about luggage restrictions"



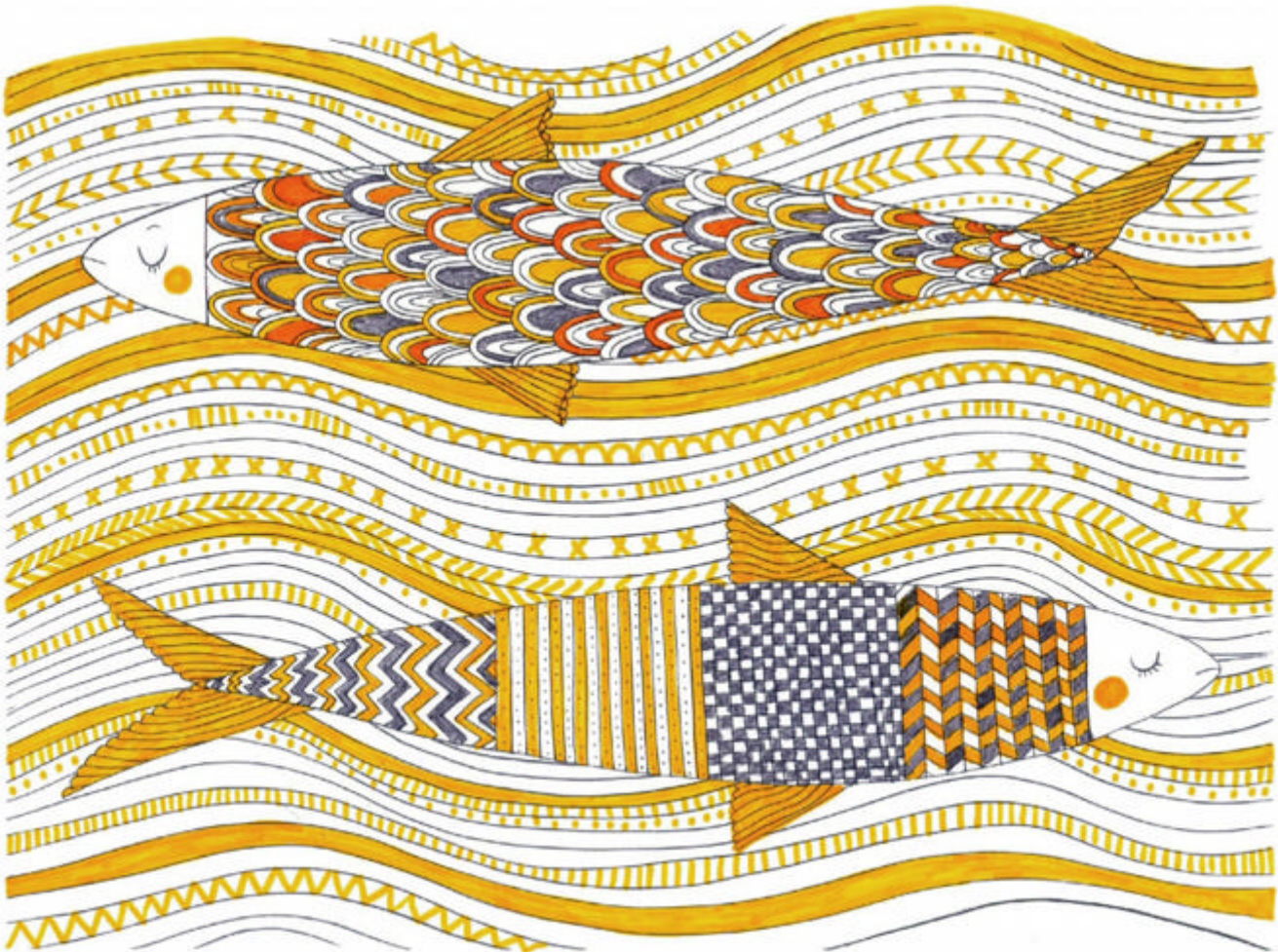
I bought six dresses and seven tops, haggling the total down from €95 (£69) to €75 (£54.50).

Chris and I went our separate ways, meeting up at midday to compare our hauls over crêpes. I'd found a couple of handbags, a beautiful 1950s basket bag (above) for €4 (£2.90) and a big mock-croc leather satchel for €13 (£9.45). Chris had a dozen records (below left), including a rare Patti Smith. Although we weren't looking for furniture this time, metal-legged wooden trestle tables and old school chairs were two a centime, as were vintage wooden wall cabinets. Just as we were beginning to flag, the heavens opened and by 3pm all that was left of the *braderie* were a few broken chairs and some soggy cardboard boxes. But we'd had a good seven hours' hunting. The rain thwarted our plans to explore the city but we've pencilled it in for our visit to the October flea – we're hooked! 



THINK

THINGS TO MAKE YOU STOP, READ AND WONDER



the simple things | BY EMMA FARRARONS from The Mindfulness Colouring Book

sole mates by mini moderns

Mindful colouring

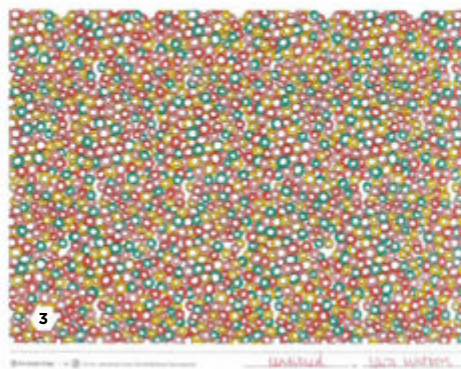
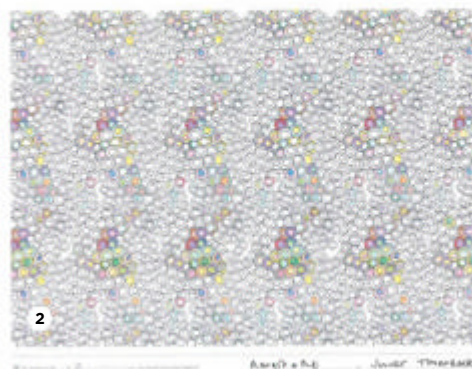
Have you embraced life in colour yet? That is, have you had a go at your free colouring cards from June's issue? (Don't worry if you missed out, there's a pattern to download at www.thesimplethings.com/blog/colouring.) For a little bit of inspiration, we asked some of our designer-maker friends to have a go and you can see some of the results over the next few pages. We were slightly unfair with our request – an exercise in mindfulness shouldn't really come with a deadline attached! – but both the results and the experience were worthwhile. Keith

and Mark, the designers behind Mini Moderns (www.minimoderns.com) are responsible for the charmingly titled 'Sole Mates' pictured here. "When we were younger we didn't do a lot of colouring in – we preferred to draw our own pictures. However, now we draw pictures for a living, it was liberating to be able to do something purely for the pleasure of it. I don't think we have used felt tips for 15 years – so even that was a treat." (More on the next page.) We'd love to see your designs, too – share via Twitter or Instagram with the hashtag #simplecolouring. »



1. 'UNTITLED' by Hannah Bullivant, Seeds and Stitches (www.seedsandstitches.com)

A convert to colouring, Hannah found it gave her time to let her "mind breathe and not think about stressful things. As a maker, I'm aware of the meditative nature of crafting, but using it as a way to help deal with stress is new to me." In fact, she went on to use her design for a collage (above).



2. 'MARGOT & ME' by Juliet Thornback, Thornback and Peel (www.thornbackandpeel.co.uk)

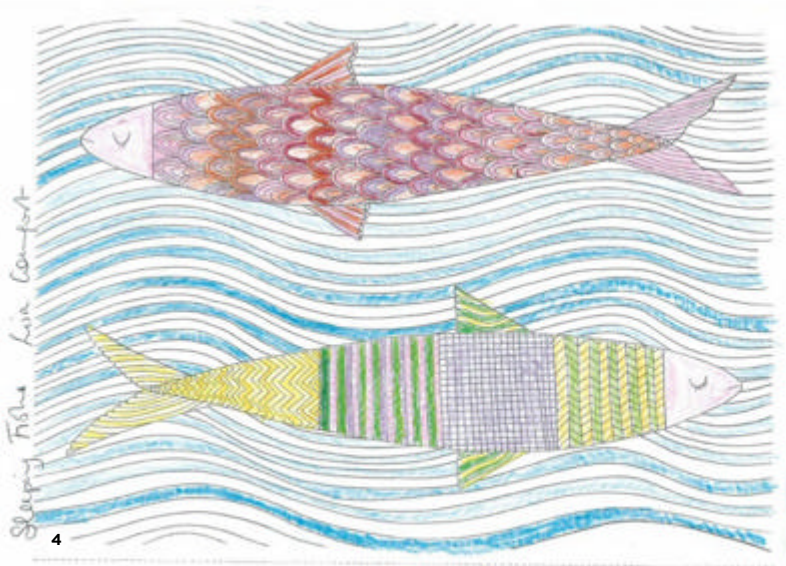
If you're admiring the colour scheme, you've got Juliet's five-year-old daughter to thank (she obviously takes after her mum in the design stakes). That, of course, left Juliet "with the fun bit, the colouring in."

3. 'UNTITLED' by Lara Watson, editor of Mollie Makes (www.molliemakes.com)

Lara discovered that spending her evening colouring in was surprisingly freeing after a day of commissioning new projects. "I found the act of simply adding felt tip to paper a luxury as I didn't have to originate the content. It was already there for me to prettify."

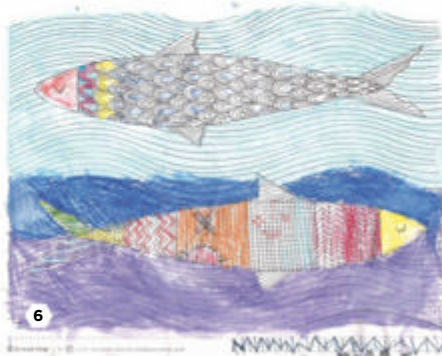
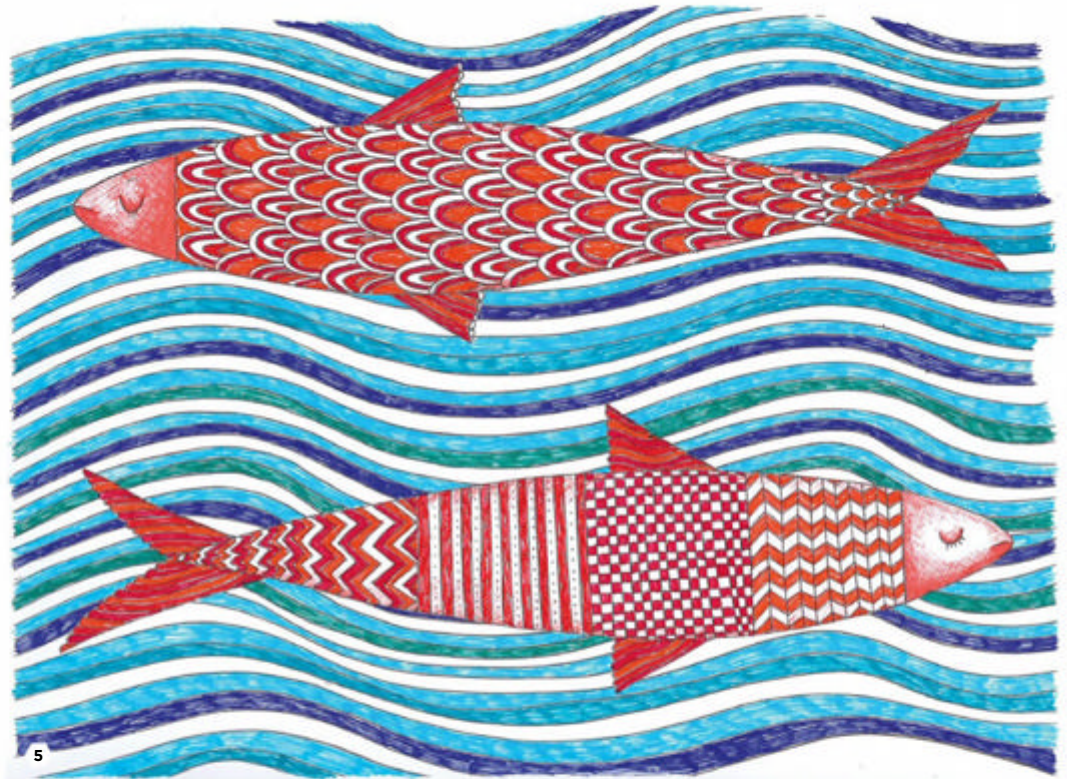
4. 'SLEEPY FISH' by Lisa Comfort, Sew Over It (www.sewoverit.co.uk)

It's always a struggle to fit everything into a day, but Lisa's experience is a cheering endorsement of why colouring may be worth it. "I went through waves of feeling I didn't have time, then really enjoying the process."



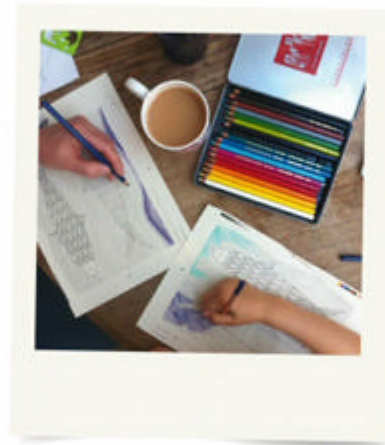
5. 'FISH WITHOUT CHIPS' by Anneliese Klos, Associate Art Editor, *The Simple Things*

Anneliese splashed out on a brand new set of fancy felt pens to give herself the drive to sit down and complete the task. She says, "It's not something to be done in a hurry, but works nicely if you dip into it a little every day, like reading a book." Will colouring in become a new habit? She has hidden the pens from her children, so the signs are good.



6 & 7. 'GOLD FISH' by Poppy Treffry (www.poppytreffry.co.uk)

Emma Farrarons, who created these designs, told us that different patterns appealed to different people. That's something Poppy found: "My colleague Charlotte said she would do the circles without question - I had looked at them and couldn't imagine colouring them in!" Poppy tackled the fish, as did her daughter Biba, and the two enjoyed "a nice quiet afternoon colouring" (below). Biba's effort is also pictured here, above left. 





The 1952 film
Against all Flags
starred Maureen
O'Hara and Errol Flynn
as suspiciously clean
and stylish pirates

PIRACY FOR GIRLS

IMAGINE A PIRATE – WHO DO YOU SEE? CAPTAIN HOOK, MAYBE, OR LONG JOHN SILVER? PERHAPS (IF YOU’RE LUCKY) CAPTAIN JACK SPARROW? IS HE A VILLAIN, OR SIMPLY A MISUNDERSTOOD REBEL? AND COULD HE BE A SHE?

Words: **FRANCES AMBLER**

While pirates are often portrayed as swashbuckling figures of adventure and daring deeds, the reality was actually more complex.

Those we’d consider ‘pirates’ were a rum mixture of opportunistic seafarers, government-endorsed privateers and downright ne’er-do-wells. And female pirates – although only a handful are known to have existed – are even more fascinating than their male counterparts.

GRANUAILE: THE PIRATE QUEEN OF IRELAND

Granuaile, the ‘Pirate Queen of Ireland’, is a figure of pirate folklore made flesh. Also known as Grace O’Malley, she was the daughter of a chieftain from Ireland’s west coast. The family living came from the sea, including a spot of plunder. For those who knew the coast, French, Spanish and English merchant ships made for rich pickings.

While keeping up the family tradition, Granuaile raised her own force of 200 men, successfully maintaining their loyalty for over 50 years. In 1593, when her power was threatened by the English administration, she didn’t hesitate to take her grievances straight to the top, sailing from Ireland to Greenwich to meet with Queen Elizabeth I. Sadly, no record exists of their conversation, but Granuaile certainly benefited, gaining herself the right of “maintenance by land and sea”, a virtual licence to continue her less than lawful activities until her deathbed.

BONNY AND READ: THE MOST NOTORIOUS PIRATES

The so-called ‘Golden Age of Piracy’ of around 1650 to 1730 gave us the two most famous female

pirates, Mary Read and Anne Bonny. Piracy was especially rife after the Spanish War of Succession, as those who had fought struggled to find legitimate work, and pirate hubs grew up along the trade routes from Europe to the Americas, especially at Port Royal in Jamaica and Nassau in the Bahamas.

Members of the same pirate crew, Anne and Mary were the stars of the 1724 bestseller by Captain Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Most Notorious Pyrates*. That book also gave us the best-known images of the duo, showing them armed and dressed as men (albeit sometimes with their breasts bared). The record of their 1720 trial in Jamaica proves at least some of their outlandish story – including their fierceness. One witness described them as “very profligate, cursing and swearing much, and very ready and willing to do anything on board.”

Women were often forbidden on ships, an offence punishable by death. So how were there any women pirates? If male pirates were generally those who couldn’t make their way in regular society, this was magnified for women.



Slash and flash: Mary Read tears open her shirt to reveal her breasts to her astonished victim

WHY WE ALL LOVE A PIRATE

As the ever-successful *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise proves, we all still love a pirate. Fashion historian Amber Jane Butchart researched their sartorial influence for her book *Nautical Chic** and discovered the pirate has been mythologised for centuries. “From Captain Hook to Captain Jack Sparrow, the pirate is now seen to embody romance and adventure on the high seas,” she says. It goes back to Bryon’s *The Corsair*, which portrayed the pirate as a romantic rebel. But they didn’t all resemble Jack Sparrow. A description of a real-life pirate she unearthed from 1699 said: “Large jointed, Lean, much disfigured with the small pox, broad Speech, thick Lipped, a blemish or Cast in his left eye.” Where’s Johnny Depp when you need him?

Hearty reads about women pirates

Bold in Her Breeches: Women Pirates Across the Ages edited by Jo Stanley (Rivers Oram Press, £11.95)

She Captains: Heroines and Hellions of the Sea by Joan Druett (Touchstone, £16.99)

Seafaring Women: Adventures of Pirate Queens, Female Stowaways, and Sailors' Wives by David Cordingly (Random House, £19.93)

The Anne Bonny legend

Anne Bonny is a popular figure in contemporary fiction. Here are just a few recent examples:

- British actress Clara Paget plays Anne in the American TV series *Black Sails*
- Anne is also a lead character in Neil Gaiman's short story *A Calendar of Tales*
- Mary Read and Anne Bonny appear in the video game *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*
- Both pirates also appear on a mural at the Disneyland *Pirates of the Caribbean* ride.



1 The 'Pirate Queen of Ireland', Granuaile, immortalised as a statue



2 Legendary Chinese pirate Cheng I Sao, as imagined in an 18th-century engraving

For some, piracy may have seemed preferable to the more obvious work of a disenfranchised woman – prostitution. As for women disguising themselves as men – as both Anne and Mary did – cross-dressing was not uncommon in England at that time. Dressing as a man offered greater freedom and access to better wages.

Neither Anne nor Mary had illustrious backgrounds, but ended up on pirate ships for very different reasons. Dressed as a man, Mary had served as a military cadet and was looking for employment when she was captured and put to work by pirates. She claimed to abhor their life, going into it “only upon compulsion”. Anne, meanwhile, was married when she met the notorious John Rackham. Also known as ‘Calico Jack’ (and the populariser of the skull and crossbones flag), he persuaded her to leave her husband and join his crew (by now including Mary Read). According to accounts at their trial, both women embraced their new positions with gusto. Witnesses claimed they fought like men, armed with pistols and cutlasses, their breasts being the only indication of their sex.

Calico Jack and his male crewmembers were executed for their misdemeanours, but Anne and Mary’s story had another sensational twist. Although found guilty, both women revealed


they were pregnant and therefore escaped death. Mary died from a fever in prison, but it’s believed Anne was released and went on to enjoy a new, law-abiding life in America.

CHENG I SAO: A CONFEDERATION OF PIRATES

Another fearsome woman pirate was Cheng I Sao, also known as Ching Shih, who terrorised the waves in 19th-century China and whose story was told in another bestseller, *History of the Pirates who infested the China Sea from 1807 to 1810*, first published in English in 1831.

A former prostitute, she gained control of a large fleet of junks in the south China seas through her marriage to the pirate Cheng I. After his death, Cheng I Sao continued his work, consolidating and organising rival Cantonese pirate fleets. By 1805, her pirate confederation included around 50,000 men, with its own systems for sanctions and sharing out booty.

Like Granuaile, Cheng I Sao was a political player as much as a fearless fighter. She negotiated a surrender with the Chinese rulers, achieving such favourable terms for the pirates, they kept their proceeds from past crimes and even gained positions within the Imperial military. With no roles for women on offer, however, Cheng I Sao used her talents to run a gambling house until her death at the age of 69.

While the realities of pirate life were hard, the fantasy image of these figures, operating outside society’s norms, is still beguiling. And women pirates challenge ideas of traditional femininity. No wonder they’ve captivated us for so long. 

“Though found guilty, Bonny and Read both revealed they were pregnant and therefore escaped death”



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THE CALMING POWERS OF



WHETHER YOU WANDER THROUGH THE WOODS,
OGLE THE OCEAN OR STARE AT THE SKIES, THE
BEST WAY TO CALM DOWN IS TO GET OUTDOORS

We all struggle with stress. Whether it's the incessant 'ping' of new emails or the daily juggling of who-needs-what-where that underpins the smooth running of family functioning, it sometimes feels as if modern life is conspiring to erode any potential downtime. Most of us have little or no time to stop, breathe and relax. And even when we do carve out those slots, in all likelihood, they're contained within a parameter somebody else has set – the time

constraint of a yoga class, say, or recording of an online meditation. But perhaps the thing that is most inherently calming, although easily forgotten, is to simply spend time in nature.

The natural world offers us all a shortcut to serenity. Walking underneath the canopy of a forest as you take in the gentle sound of rain on leaves overhead, scaling the hills around a beautiful lake with the cleansing burn of fresh air in your lungs, or sitting with your gaze fixed on the point where sea meets sky are routes to instant calm. Sometimes, even glimpses of or the mental



evocation of the natural world (while sitting on a crowded commuter train or chained to your desk), is enough to simulate the calming effects of nature. Although, of course, nothing beats the real thing.

NATURE AND ARTIFICE

For Aristotle, the world was divided into nature and 'artifice', by which he meant human intervention. Subsequent philosophers questioned this division, but it still has common-sense appeal. Modern life is both enabled by and cluttered with artifice. Human interventions insulate us from the natural world. They keep us warm and well fed in winter and help us to cheat time and multitask. All this is wonderful, but it means that we're living at more of a remove from nature than ever before.

Many spiritual traditions caution against this disconnect, by reminding us of the fundamental link between the human and natural worlds. From Native American reverence towards the 'Great Spirit' of Mother Earth, to the world tree of Norse

mythology and the lotus flower iconography of Buddhism, potent symbols of the nurturing power of nature are everywhere. The cycle of the natural world is both a humbling reminder of our own irrelevance and an affirming eternal truth. It's so much a part of our being that when we lose touch with it, we're cut off from a part of ourselves.

Science, as well as art, persuades us of the power of nature. Research shows that spending time in natural spaces benefits our mental and physical health. In hospitals, patients' recovery times are improved when they have a view of green space from their bed. A study looking at the introduction of green space into a built-up, deprived housing estate in Chicago found that aggressive behaviour and crime decreased, while self-discipline and mental wellbeing increased. Likewise, children who spend more time outside are calmer, happier and healthier than those who don't.

Need a little inspiration? There are countless ways to tap into the calming power of nature... »

HOW TO FIND NATURAL CALM

CONSIDER THE COLOUR OF THE SEA

The range of hues in a seascape is astonishing. The ocean appears thick and grey under heavy cloud, glitters under a midday sun and deepens to darkness as the sun drops.

The waters off the Cornish coast are especially changeable and the Cornish language has specific words to describe this phenomenon: *glas* – blue or blue-green; *arhans* – silver; *gwerwyn* – light green; *dulas* – dark green; *cowsherny* – olive green.

Take off your shoes

Free your feet: those conveyors of your body, often neglected and caged in socks and heavy shoes. Go barefoot somewhere you can feel grass, earth or sand underfoot. There's no simpler way to reconnect with the earth.

Borrow a dog

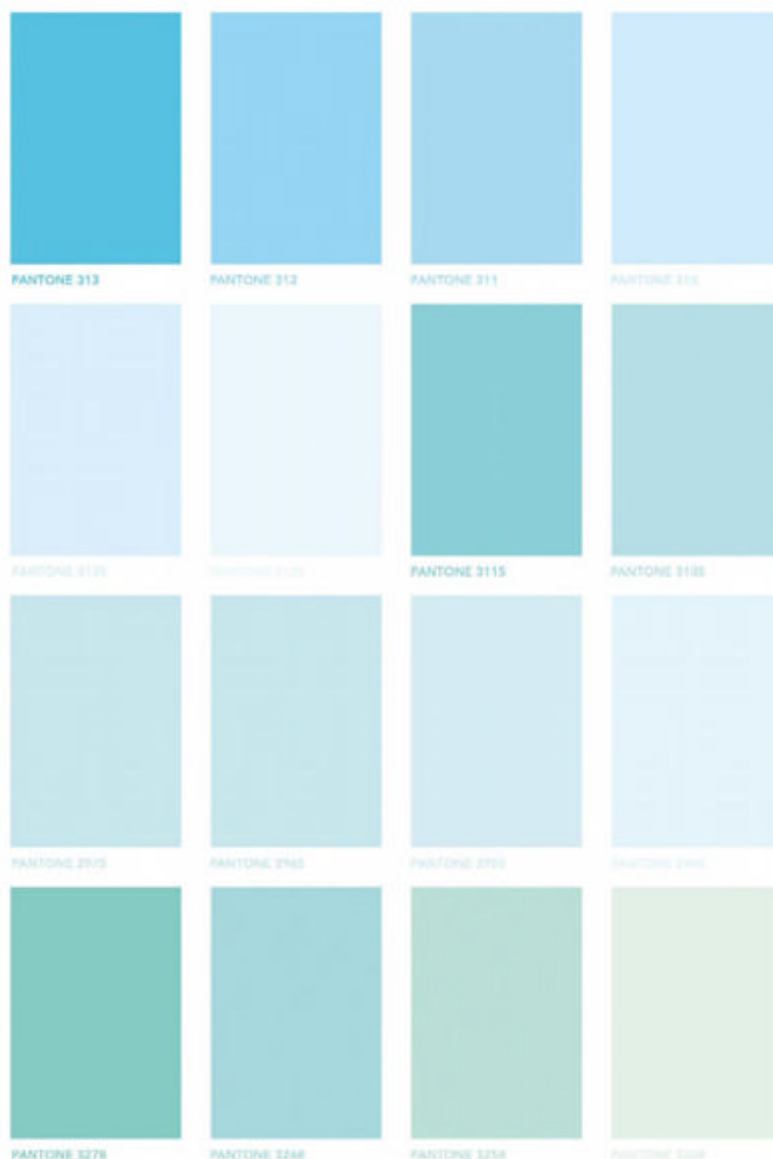
Spending time with a friendly canine can have a powerfully calming effect. In a study at UCLA, researchers examined the impact of weekly visits from a human volunteer and dog team and found that a four-legged visitor led to a reduction in anxiety scores and stress hormones.

Go cloud-gazing

When you're feeling hemmed in by life, a spot of cloud-gazing is an unbeatable way to restore serenity. Projecting your own terrestrial shapes (a top hat here, a sleigh there) onto nature's ultimate big screen is a form of hallucinatory doodling, and invites a little whimsy into your day.

Watch some water

Whether it's the rhythmic rippling of the sea, the mellow weedy green of a slow-moving river or the enchanting sound of



a babbling stream, watching water is inherently calming.

Hang out

Grab hold of a tree branch, lift your feet off the ground and feel your upper and lower back stretch out as your feet are relieved of the weight of your body.

Read some nature poetry

Focusing for a few minutes on a perfectly crafted poem can open your mind to the beauty that surrounds you. Try Wordsworth, Yeats, Seamus Heaney, Anne Bronte or Emily Dickinson.

“Everyone should have themselves regularly overwhelmed by nature.”

George Harrison

Adapted from Calm by Michael Acton Smith (Penguin, £9.99)

PRESS A FLOWER

When was the last time you picked a flower with the sole aim of honouring and preserving its perfection? The beauty of a dried flower is not the same as the ephemeral lustre of one that is freshly picked, but through careful pressing and preserving, it is transmuted into something new. This is a slow pleasure and patience is rewarded (open the flower press too soon and the flower will break). **S**



WHERE DO YOU READ YOURS?

It's official: a subscription to *The Simple Things* makes you feel good.
Don't take our word for it – here's what our readers think



Shelley Bailey @shelleybailey_ • 28 Mar
Saturday afternoon coffee
and @simplethingsmag is a
favourite treat #mysimplething



Nicola Warner @Nic Warner • 16 April
Relaxing reading
@simplethingsmag
with Daiquiri #Marrakech



Viv @76sunflowers • 28 May
Oooh colouring in for grown
ups! :) #embracehappy
#simplethings Good addition
@simplethingsmag! :-)



Lynsey Woods @woodslynsey • 21 Mar
David is out and I'm having a
crazy night in with Louie and
@simplethingsmag
#metime #simplethings



Mandy James @mandyjames1979 • May 27
Tonight's reading sorted.
Love the free mindfulness
colouring cards with this
@simplethingsmag issue too! :-)



Kirstie Rowson @And_SoWeBegin • 23 May
It's @simplethingsmag day!
Wonderful to come home to :-)
#simplethings



Jessie May @JessieJabberwooc • 25 April
#Saturday Morning cuppa with
the bluebells :-)



Josephine Amos @josephinehq • 8 April
My first @simplethingsmag
since moving to Canada!
A little taste of home goes
a long way....
#mysimplething #overseas



Rachel Wood @borismurchie • 21 Mar
@simplethingsmag the best
day of the month when this
bundle of joy arrives
#simple pleasures #utter joy



Jen Ashton @JenAshton • 1 June
Been saving up my
@simplethingsmag so that
I have 2 to read on my holiday.
Smashing start to the week :-)



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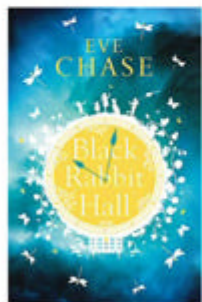
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HOLIDAY READING LIST

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU'VE GOT A REAL ADVENTURE PLANNED OR NOT - THESE BOOKS WILL TAKE YOU ON A JOURNEY

Reviews by **EITHNE FARRY**



***Black Rabbit Hall* by Eve Chase** (Michael Joseph, £12.99, published 2 July)

There's endless appeal in the stately home novel, especially if it's beautifully

dilapidated, and stuffed full of family secrets. *Black Rabbit Hall* is just such a place, hidden away on the Cornish coast, once alive to children's shouts and a happy marriage, until death and neglect destroyed the spell. But then Lorna arrives, looking for a wedding venue, and finds herself beguiled by its dark charms. Lonely after the death of her adopted mother, she's keen to discover her roots and the hall seems to be part of her intriguing past.



***Circling The Sun* by Paula McLain** (Virago, £14.99, published 28 July)

Paula McLain, the bestselling author of *The Paris Wife*, heads to the skies in this wonderful novel about aviator Beryl



Markham, who was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. Feisty, headstrong and with a penchant for scandalous behaviour, she was part of the glamorous, decadent Happy Valley set in 1920s Kenya, and embroiled in a complex emotional tangle with hunter Denys Finch Hatton and Karen Blixen (author of *Out of Africa*). It's a thrilling, wrenching tale of a trail-blazer determined to live by her own rules.



***By Grand Central Station I Sat Down And Wept* by Elizabeth Smart** (Fourth Estate, £5.59)

Angela Carter described this raging, grief stricken prose poem as '*Madam*

Bovary blasted by lightning... a masterpiece'. It's a thin-skinned recreation of the author's intense affair with married writer George Barker. Elizabeth picked up a volume of his poetry and was smitten

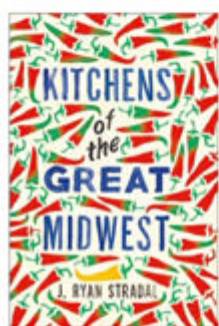
with his words, and prepared to risk everything to gain his love. It was a difficult relationship, with a tragic ending, a catalogue of hurt and jealousy, brilliantly chronicled in this hymn to heartbreak.



***Just Kids* by Patti Smith** (Bloomsbury, £6.29)

Patti Smith always wanted to be an artist, but wasn't sure how to go about it. So she headed to New York, full of

undefined dreams, met and fell in love with Robert Mapplethorpe and began to forge her way in the bright lights of the big city. It's an unforgettable portrait of their relationship and of Manhattan counter-culture - the dazzling world of Warhol's Factory, writers, musicians and painters - where the romantic duo survived hunger and poverty and displayed a huge appetite for all that life has to offer.



***Kitchens of the Great Midwest*
by J Ryan Stradal**

(Quercus, £13.48, published 6 August)

J Ryan Stradal's delicious debut follows the path of Eva Thorvald, whose exceptional taste buds transform her life. Each chapter of this quirky, lovable novel is narrated by different people in Eva's world – from her first boyfriend to a jealous rival, to her brusque cousin Braque – filling in the details of her life, from her mother running away with a sommelier to Eva's triumph as the star chef in a legendary and secretive pop-up supper club. The story culminates in the ultimate dinner – a gorgeous feast that feeds both the senses and the soul.



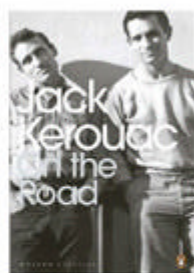
***The Expedition*
by Bea Uusma**
(Head of Zeus, £15.69)

On 11 July three men set out in a hydrogen balloon bound for the North Pole but they're forced to crash land and disappear into a world of snow and ice. Their bodies are found 33 years later on a deserted glacier, with food, clothing and ammunition, so why did they die? It's a question that haunted artist and Doctor Bea Uusma for years, until finally she headed to White Island in an attempt to solve the mystery. This beautifully written adventure story is a blend of memoir and poetic investigation, packed with maps, photographs, lists and journal entries.



***Church of Marvels*
by Leslie Parry**
(Ecco Press, £17.70)

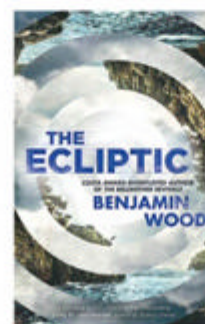
Odile Church, the spinning girl on the wheel of death, has pretty much lost everything. Her mother died in the fire that tore through their sideshow on Coney Island, her beautiful twin sister disappeared into the wilds of turn-of-the-century Manhattan, and Odile isn't sure who she is any more: "to be seen but not known is perhaps the loneliest feeling of all." So she sets off on a quest to find her sister: a strange, hallucinatory journey that involves opium dens, mental asylums, brothels – and answers to her questions.



***On the Road*
by Jack Kerouac**
(Penguin Classics, £6.29)

The ultimate road trip book. Kerouac typed the manuscript over three weeks on a 120ft scroll of taped-together tracing paper, gleaning incidents from his real life, friends and lovers. *On the Road* recounts the free-wheeling adventures of Sal Paradise (thinly-disguised Kerouac) and Dean Moriarty

(Neal Cassady) as they criss-cross America with a backdrop of jazz, poetry, drugs and sex. As Sal says: "The only people for me are... the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like yellow Roman candles."



***The Ecliptic*
by Benjamin Wood**
(Scribner, £13.49, published 2 July)

Benjamin Wood's enigmatic second novel explores what happens when the muse deserts the artist. Elspeth Conroy is a celebrated painter with a traumatic past, whose inspiration disappears. In desperation she retreats from the London high life to an isolated island to try to recapture her gift. In a blacked-out studio she spends hours attempting to find a new way of working with a new medium. It's a compelling tale of obsession and creativity, and of the strange territory artists visit in the attempt to make a masterpiece.



***Venice*
by Jan Morris**
(Faber & Faber, £10.68)

Jan Morris's breathtakingly beautiful *Venice* is often hailed as the best book written about the watery city and it's a magical, maddening, melancholy read. Jan Morris first visited as young James Morris during World War II (before her sex-change operation) and the book is as much a history of Jan as it is a history of a place. It's brimful of evocative details, fine palaces sinking under water, crooked bridges over calm canals, old fashioned pizzerias and amorous couples kissing in the shadow of a wall. It's a heady experience, travelling with Morris ripe with "lust and dark wine", but a very entertaining one. **S**

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NEST

LOVE YOUR HOME INSIDE AND OUT WITH THE SIMPLE THINGS



Sweet peas

There is plenty to love about sweet peas. The way they scramble riotously up cane wigwams, harnessing their butterfly-wing flowers with tendrils. And the colours of the blooms*, washed-out and graded, like a watercolour left out in the rain. But their greatest appeal is surely their scent. Heady and sweet, it is often replicated by the perfume industry but never matched. Cut the flowers regularly to keep them coming and bring indoors to fill the house with the fragrance of summer.

PHOTOGRAPHY: DESIRÉE HOGENELST, MADELIEFJE-MADELIEFBLOGSPOT.NL, WORDS: CLARE GOGERTY

* The multi-coloured varieties of ornamental Sweet peas as we know them were created in the late 1800s by Scottish nurseryman Henry Eckford.



Tamira painted everything she could white: walls, ceiling, even the furniture. The (white) dining chairs are modern classics by Charles Eames

BESIDE THE SEA

THIS IS WHERE WE WANT TO BE THIS SUMMER: IN A TIMBER HOUSE
YARDS FROM THE BEACH WITH SAND BETWEEN OUR TOES.
CHECK OUT THIS DUTCH FAMILY'S HOLIDAY HOME FOR INSPIRATION

Words: **CLARE GOGERTY** Photography and styling: **SOURAYA HASSAN, BINTI HOME**





This is the stuff of holiday dreams: a beach house tucked behind sand dunes a stroll from a long, sandy beach. Near enough to hear the pounding of the surf and the squawk of the gulls, and close enough to nip back to the house should extra snacks be needed.

“Our favourite thing to do,” says its owner, Tamira van Woerden, “is to walk through the dunes at sunset for a night-time sea swim. Then we dry off and head back to the house with torches to light our way. If it’s chilly, we light the wood burner and sit and watch the flames. If it’s still warm, we sit on the deck and chat. It’s magical.”

The house, in Noordwijk (not far from Amsterdam) in the Netherlands, was built in 2013 to Tamira’s specifications. It feels very Scandinavian with its light, bright wooden interior and simple furnishings. “We came up with the design with a Swedish builder who lives in Holland,” says Tamira. “We wanted a simple structure: a single-storey building with a mezzanine for a bedroom and plenty of height and space.”

A HOUSE TO SHARE

Originally the intention was to keep the house for family holidays: Tamira and her husband Johan have two boys, »

“This is a place to wander around in flip-flops without worrying about bringing sand inside”

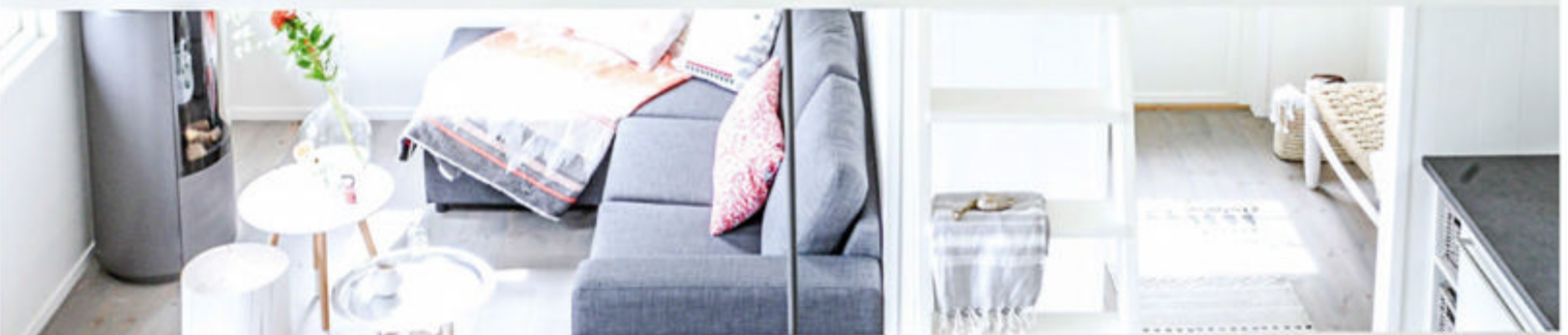
TAMIRA VAN WOERDEN

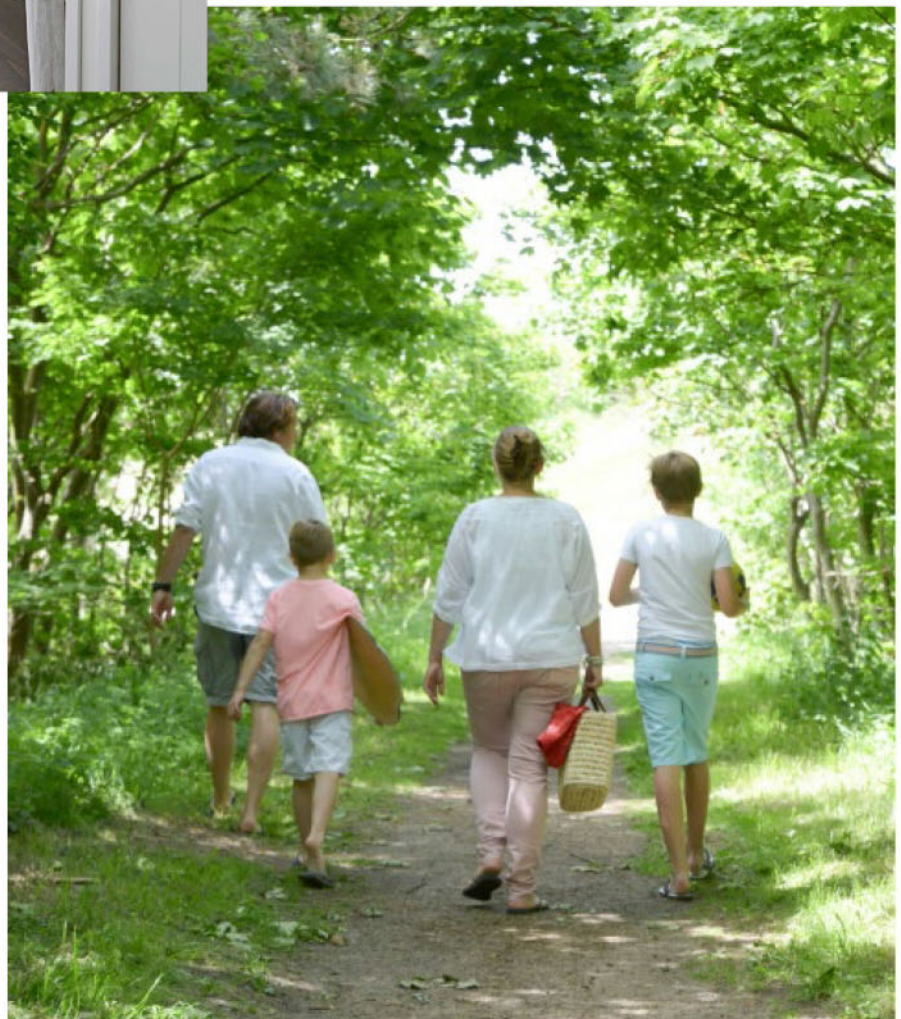
lives near The Hague in the Netherlands and runs a PR agency. She loves to travel and spend time with her family.



The house is simply furnished. "Guests add the colour," says Tamira. The cushions and beaker are by Donna Wilson. The stool is made from a tree trunk painted white

Although the house is single-storey, it feels light and spacious. The bedrooms are up in the eaves on a mezzanine floor and look out over the living area







Tamira and her family enjoying the sunshine on the deck. In the evenings they sit and watch the sun set from this spot

TAMIRA'S STYLE

- 1 Don't be frightened of too much white. It's the best backdrop for other colours and makes any room feel more spacious. You can always repaint if it gets scuffed-up.
- 2 Should you be lucky enough to own a timber building, paint the exterior black for a touch of Scandi style. White window frames will look especially smart against it.
- 3 Buy co-ordinating lampshades: I found matching pendant, standard and wall lights with the same brushed steel shades.
- 4 If you have wooden floorboards, sand them and paint with a light-coloured floor paint. (www.littlegreene.com has some lovely ones.)
- 5 Don't forget the outdoors. Any opportunity to eat in the open air is to be seized, so make sure you've got somewhere to sit.

Beer (14) and Joor (10), but Tamira soon realised that other people would also enjoy it and now rents it out. "We have another home which is about half-an-hour's drive away, also near the sea," she says, "so it makes sense to share this one with guests."

And the guests keep coming back, drawn by the bright, clean simplicity of the house and the gentle landscape that surrounds it. "Noordwijk is a lovely coastal village with a beautiful 3km beach," says Tamira. "It's one of the few places in the Netherlands where you are able to safely live close to the dunes, and to the sea."

A LIGHTNESS OF TOUCH

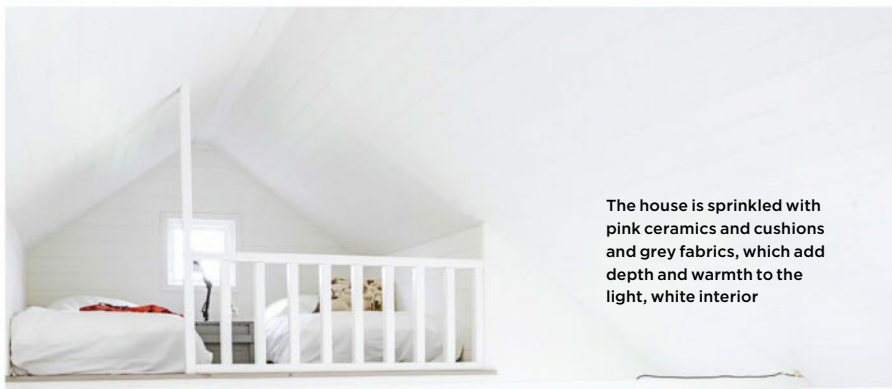
When it came to decorating, Tamira created a Pinterest board of furniture and interiors she liked. Most of her inspiration was Scandinavian, especially the colour scheme – almost totally white with a few grey and pink accents, which add warmth. "I believe white is a good colour to begin with," she says. "It works especially well when you have lots of guests – they bring the colour with them. It also means that you can change accessories easily when you want to freshen everything up."

She bought all the furniture, again mostly white, over a couple of months. "Nothing was expensive," she says, "but it was all carefully chosen." The result – a squishy grey sofa, wooden coffee tables of varying heights, a steel standard lamp, a stool made from a tree trunk – is sparse yet playful. This is a place to wander around in flip-flops without worrying about bringing sand into the house.

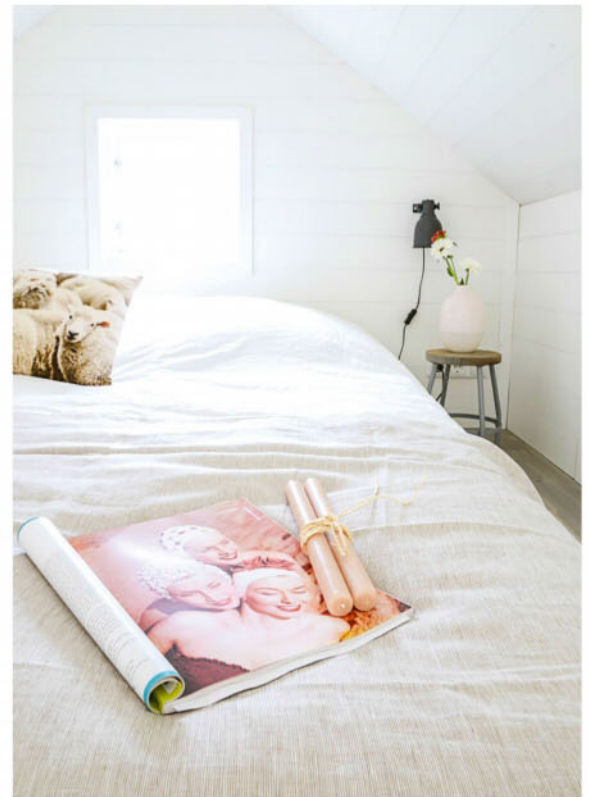
Outside on the deck are tables and chairs to sit on and while away a summer evening. "We love sitting there on a warm summer's evening watching the sun go down," says Tamira. "It's simply the perfect place to be."

For information or to rent the cottage, visit www.huisjevanhoutinnoordwijk.nl





The house is sprinkled with pink ceramics and cushions and grey fabrics, which add depth and warmth to the light, white interior



Make!

MAKING TRACKS

DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR HOLIDAY MAPS: CREATE GORGEOUS KEEPSAKES INSTEAD

Compiled by: **FRANCES AMBLER**

Whether you're a day-tripper or more dedicated traveller, you're sure to feel affection for that most faithful of companions: the map. It is, however, something of a summer romance. Once you've returned home and the sun and the memories begin to fade, the trusty map often gets relegated to a little-used drawer.

These simple projects help your map to live again: as coasters, a passport holder and a cover for a travel notebook. They'll hopefully revive some fond memories of favourite trips, or perhaps inspire a few more adventures.



Memorable coasters

NAVIGATE YOUR COFFEE TABLE: MAP COASTERS
MAKE HOMES FOR MUGS

You will need:
sponge brush
maps (works with pictures, too)
Mod Podge sealer (buy it at www.hobbycraft.co.uk)
bathroom tiles
pencil
scissors
craft knife
resin or polymer coating (Kraftex Pratliglo, from Amazon and eBay)
ice cream stick
toothpicks

- 1 With a sponge brush, paint the front of the maps with a thin layer of Mod Podge and leave to dry. This strengthens the paper.
- 2 Using a tile as a template, mark and cut out the maps or pictures.
- 3 Paint the back of each map with Mod Podge.

4 Position the pictures, face-up, on top of each tile.

5 Paint another coat of Mod Podge over the pictures and remove any air bubbles by gently pushing down from the centre of the tile and out toward the edges with your fingertips. Seal the edges with a final coat of modge podge then leave to dry completely.

6 Use a craft knife to cut away any extra paper from the edges.

7 Prepare the resin or polymer coating according to the pack instructions. Mix enough to coat all the tiles. Pour the resin onto the tiles and make sure it reaches the edges, but does not overflow. Spread it carefully into the corners with an ice cream stick.

8 Gently prick and remove any air bubbles with a toothpick and leave to dry and harden in a dust- and draught-free area.

Almie Louis is a South African based in Stratford-upon-Avon, who uses her blog, Grand Recycler (www.grandrecycler.com) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/thegrandrecycler) to share craft projects with an up-cycling theme. Her book *From Drab to Fab* (Struik Lifestyle) explains how to turn unwanted items into beautiful décor.

With these map coasters you can relive your travels every time you have a cup of tea



3



4



6



Travel journal

For a journal with a difference, this geographically gorgeous cover was made by weaving together strips taken from two old maps, and applying them to a notebook with a clever use of double-sided tape. It was created by Emma Bonsall of Ruby Murrays Musings, a blog celebrating recycling, refashions and all things super crafty. See the full tutorial on her blog, www.rubymurraysmusings.blogspot.ca

Passport holder

Cat Morley and Tom Waddington's book *Cut Out + Keep* (Laurence King, £17.95) charts a US road trip with a difference, as the couple created a memento for each state they visited. This 'Vacationland passport holder' was made in honour of Maine ('Vacationland' is the State's nickname) and will keep your passport looking smart on trips by plane, train or automobile. To make one for yourself:

- 1 Trace around your passport on to a piece of card to make a template, leaving a 1.5cm margin around the outside. Cut out with scissors.
- 2 Cut two rectangles slightly bigger than your card template from clear vinyl. Cut out two thinner rectangles that are the same height but half the width.
- 3 Trace around the template twice on to an old map, then cut out photos and scraps to decorate your holder with.
- 4 Glue the two map pieces together, with right sides facing out, and decorate with the cuttings.
- 5 Place the map piece between the two vinyl rectangles and position the two half-rectangles on the inside piece at the very left and right sides.
- 6 These will hold your passport in place. Sew around the outside edge of the map on a machine.
- 7 Cut any excess vinyl from the edges.
- 8 Put your passport inside.



Use maps and mementoes from previous trips (top) to make a holder for your passport on your next adventure (above)



The colour purple: the many shades in a show garden proves there is a huge range of choice in lavender varieties

THE PURPLE PATCH

GROW LAVENDER IN YOUR GARDEN AND YOU'LL BE REWARDED WITH PRETTY SCENTED BLOOMS AND AN INGREDIENT FOR ALL MANNER OF CULINARY AND BEAUTY CONCOCTIONS

Words: **CINEAD McTERNAN**

Last summer I had a lavender epiphany. I wanted to put in a hedge at the front of a raised bed and I'd all but decided on the classic English variety, *Lavandula angustifolia*, when I remembered Downderry Nursery's spectacular display at last year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. With one click of the mouse, a world of opportunity opened up to me.

Not that there's anything wrong with common lavender, of course. It looks gorgeous, is easy to grow and is available everywhere, from garden centres and nurseries to DIY stores and even supermarkets. But taking the time to look further afield provided me with an incredible range of colours, cultivars and sizes from which to choose. I was able to pick the best type to create a low hedge that would thrive in my north-east-facing garden.

Buying from a specialist also has the bonus of expert advice. I was instantly drawn to the compact 'Lavenite Petite', with its charming pompom flowers, and the pale 'Blue Ice'. Both cultivars of *L. angustifolia*, they're perfect for hedging. I was also tempted by the long-eared



cerise-pink French lavender, *Lavandula stoechas* 'With Love', and the unusual delicate trident-shaped flowers of *Lavandula buchii* var. *buchii* to use in container displays.

Soon my virtual basket was full of an unusual collection of varieties to provide summer-long colour, a heavenly scent and a great source of food and drink for insects. So, if you're planning to use lavender in a pot, to soften a path or to edge a border, it could be time to expand your horizons.

WHICH SPECIES?

There are several types of lavender, which can be identified by the shape of the flowers. »

Bring a bunch of lavender indoors and you could use it to flavour sugar, rinse your hair or ease a headache (see page 108)



*“Frost-hardy French lavender, *Lavandula stoechas*, is easily recognised by its tufted ‘ears’, which can be picked and used in salads”*

English lavender, *Lavandula angustifolia*, has cylindrical flowers that come in a range of shades, from palest pink to a deep purple. It’s the hardiest variety, and can cope with temperatures as low as -15C. It’s also the most popular one for use in cooking; it’s said that the richer the colour, the more delicious the delicate flavour. This type is also the one most likely to be used to make perfumes and aromatherapy oils. “Choose any of the *angustifolia* or *x intermedia* lavenders,” says Downderry Nursery’s owner, Simon Charlesworth, “and stick to one variety if you’re growing a formal hedge – the effect is stunning.” **French lavender**, *Lavandula stoechas*, is easily recognised by its tufted ‘ears’, which can be picked and used in salads. Frost-hardy, it will cope with cold, but not harsh weather, and needs a free-draining soil to make it through winter. **Half-hardy lavenders** (*Lavandula dentata* and

Lavandula x gingsii) need a bit more TLC to weather our British climate and their flowers have more subtle tufts as opposed to ears.

Tender lavenders, with their pretty scented lacy foliage and unique trident-shaped (unscented) flower spikes, must be brought indoors to see out the winter months.

HOW TO GROW

Planting Lavender is happiest in a free-draining neutral to alkaline soil. It’s native to a host of hot and dry countries, including southern Europe, the Mediterranean, northern and eastern Africa and south-east India. French lavender grows in acidic soil in the wild, so it’s the variety to go for if your soil is acidic and you don’t want the hassle of changing its pH. Always dig in horticultural grit when planting, to help drainage; it’s our wet winter weather that does most damage to lavender grown in the UK.

Plant in spring if you’re making a hedge, and space lavenders 30cm apart. If growing in a container, Simon suggests a 30-40cm pot or bigger. It’s important to add a feed in summer – a slow-release fertiliser is probably the easiest



option. Keep an eye on the root growth and pot on as they appear from the bottom of the pot.

Pruning Hardy lavenders should be pruned immediately after flowering, cutting back to within an inch or two of woody growth, but not into it. This will give the plant a chance to produce a second flush of green growth before summer's out, meaning you have something pretty to look at over winter. As French lavender flowers on and off throughout summer and into autumn, prune after they first flower, then deadhead for the rest of the time. If they're looking a little untidy at the very end of summer, give them a light snip to help keep them in shape. Half-hardy and tender lavenders just need dead-heading, with the occasional hard prune to maintain a good shape to the plant.

Propagating You can collect and sow seed to make more plants, but it's easier and more successful to take cuttings. In summer, take softwood or semi-ripe cuttings; if you're propagating in autumn, take hardwood cuttings.

Picking Whether you're picking lavender for cooking or to use in dried-flower arrangements, pick just before the buds come into bloom. »

- ❶ French lavender, which flowers in July
- ❷ The bushy blooms of 'Ashdown Forest'
- ❸ Abundant beds of 'Folgate' try to take over a path
- ❹ 'Sussex' lavender has a long, purple poker of a flower

DOWNDERRY NURSERY'S TOP FIVE VARIETIES

1 **'Ashdown Forest'** Early flowering, great habit and lush foliage. A good hedger and lovely scent for a short lavender. 50cm x 75cm.

2 **'Folgate'** Fantastic, almost ultraviolet colour at dawn and dusk. Robust, dries very blue for bunching. 60cm x 80cm.

3 **'Grosso'** Great scent, so good for lavender bags. 75cm x 100cm.

4 **'Sussex'** Good scent, very architectural habit and good for bunching. It has the longest flowers – as in length of flower, not length of flowering time. 90cm x 120cm.

5 **'Flaming Purple'** Brilliant French lavender with lovely long 'ears', and it's one of the first to flower in mid-May. 60cm x 75cm.

www.downderry-nursery.co.uk



PURPLE REIGNS

Lavender has plenty of uses indoors, too. Rachele Blondel shares her recipes for scented loveliness

Dearly loved and cherished for generations, lavender is one of the most prized herbs. Its deep violet hues and sweet-smelling foliage can lift the downest of hearts with just a few sniffs. It has been used for everything from hair rinses and skin care to keeping linens pest-free and sweet smelling to gently flavouring a delicate biscuit or cheeky tippie.

- A few drops of lavender oil applied directly to a burn can speed healing time and lessen pain.
- Crush fresh lavender flowers and rub onto your skin to help ward off midges and mosquitoes.
- Lavender oil rubbed onto your temples can ease a tension headache.
- A drop on a child's pillow can help them drift off to sleep. Possibly.

- Add a teaspoon of lavender flowers to homemade lemonade and serve over ice for a refreshing summer drink.
- Used as a hair rinse, lavender can soothe an inflamed scalp, balance oil production and help to prevent hair loss.
- Mix a tablespoon of lavender flowers with a cup of bicarbonate of soda. Sprinkle onto a carpet or rug, leave for 30 minutes (or ideally overnight), then vacuum for a fresh-smelling carpet.
- Place bunches of dried lavender flowers in cupboards to deter moths and silverfish.
- Put a teaspoon of lavender flowers in a jam jar of caster sugar and leave in a dark cupboard for a few weeks, then sprinkle on cakes and biscuits, or even porridge, for a gentle floral treat.
- Infuse honey with lavender flowers.

Lavender and cider vinegar toner

An excellent toner for the skin, this blend of lavender and apple cider vinegar makes a great addition to your skincare regime. Both ingredients are renowned for their antiseptic and antibacterial properties, so they're ideal to use on problem areas. Apple cider vinegar also helps to restore the natural pH balance of your skin, making it super soft with a rosy glow.

50ml apple cider vinegar
100ml lavender hydrosol
(distilled flower water, see below for method)
small bottle

- 1 Pour the ingredients into a small bottle and shake well.
- 2 Use morning and evening as part of your skincare routine. (If you find the vinegar smell a little over-powering, dilute with more hydrosol.)

How to make plant hydrosol

- 1 Place your plant material in the base of an old stove-top Italian-style Moka coffee pot and cover with water. Remove the filter where the ground coffee would go and screw on the lid.
- 2 Heat gently on the stove until the hydrosol has gathered in the top of the coffee pot, then pour it into a heatproof jar and place the lid on immediately.
- 3 When cool, store in the fridge and use as needed. Discard any unused hydrosol after a month and make a fresh batch. Don't use the pot to make coffee in again – treat yourself to a new pot and keep them separate.

Recipes taken from *Forgotten Ways for Modern Days* by Rachelle Blondel (Kyle Books, £14.99).



If you have an outdoor space
you can have a barbecue. Roof
terraces are especially ace

Home truths

IN A NEW SERIES ABOUT WHAT REALLY GOES ON AT HOME, WE INVITE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OVER TO **HAVE A BARBECUE**. JOIN US IN THE GARDEN FOR THE BEST MEAL OF THE SUMMER

Words **CLARE GOGERTY**

PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE our climate is so uncertain, that as soon as a warm summer evening arrives, we pull on a comedy apron and pile out into the garden with strings of sausages, cans of beer and a bag of charcoal. It's barbecue time: the most sociable and entertaining meal of all. Even if your outdoor space is a backyard, balcony or the local park, cook al fresco and a friendly world of shorts-and-sandals and messy eating opens up. A barbecued meal is one to relish rather

than savour. This is the antidote to fine dining, it's food that can be picked up and dribbled down your T-shirt, and drinks that can be slurped as you stand around the cook as he (it often is a he – there's something about men and grills) prods and flips burgers, steaks and corn on the cob.

Genevieve Taylor, author of *How to Eat Outside*, says that eating in her garden is something she does at every opportunity. "It means just a little bit more freedom. It's about breaking routines – we all have to cook and eat day in, day out, and sometimes, that can feel like a real chore. Taking food outside is a refreshing and energising change, and it's really simple to do."

We couldn't agree more – grilling food outdoors is easy and fun, as long as you keep to a few ingredients and have one or two handy tools and plenty of relishes to slather on anything singed. Plus the trend for 'low and slow' cooking means that if you have a kettle barbecue, you can leave meat for hours, leaving you to socialise as mouth-watering succulence of the highest order cooks gently.

WHICH BARBECUE?



BARREL BARBECUE | £70
Has a cover for slow roasts.
www.tesco.com

Charcoal and wood: the default barbecues for most of us come in a variety of styles, from the simple kettle to more elaborate versions with smokers, double decks and side tables. They all offer glowing embers: what a barbecue is all about in our book.





FOOD THAT'S SMOKIN'

The sizzle of a steak is the barbecue's defining sound, and the smell of a sausage blistering its irresistible accompaniment. Meat, from steak to hot dogs, is the principal ingredient for garden grilling, but other options are available.

Fish takes little time, can be cooked in a silver foil pouch and is extremely tasty. Embrace the trend for all things charred and try leeks, cabbage, corn-on-the-cob, even lettuce. Toss with olive oil, salt, and a splash of vinegar, then char quickly.

Books to get you grilling

How to eat outside: fabulous al fresco food by Genevieve Taylor (Bantam Press, £14.99)

Grill it with Levi: 100 reggae recipes for sunshine and soul by Levi Roots (Ebury Press, £5.95)

Pitt Cue Co, the Cookbook by Tom Adams, Jamie Berger, Simon Anderson and Richard H Turner (Mitchell Beazley, £20)

Slow Fire by Ray Lampe (Chronicle Books, £14.99)

Steak, chicken and burgers are the most popular food to barbecue

Disposable barbecues: although it is very tempting to pick one of these up from a garage or supermarket, beware! They will burn the ground, cannot be recycled or composted and often contain charcoal from unsustainable forests.

Electric: good for a patio or terrace, ie somewhere near a plug, though some have batteries. More efficient and cleaner than charcoal or wood but, we can't help thinking, lacking the romance – and flavour.



PORTABLE BARBECUE | £90
Has a temperature gauge.
www.alfresia.co.uk



PLANCHA GRILL | £289
Made in France from rolled steel.
www.verycook.co.uk

Gas: people are sniffy about these as they lack authenticity and don't really deliver on flavour. On the plus side, they are easy to use, offer immediate outdoor cooking possibilities and are easy to control.

Kettle barbecue: this rounded bowl with a lid was dreamt up in America by George Stephen Snr who cut a metal buoy in half, added air vents and legs and founded the Weber company. Great to keep the heat and smoky flavour locked in.



SMOKEY JOE BARBECUE | £70
The original and the best.
www.johnlewis.com



WHISTABLE BARBECUE | £24
Simple, nifty and portable.
www.theglamcampingcompany.com

A bucket: sometimes the simplest solutions are the best: put charcoal inside a metal bucket then lay a bit of mesh (eg from a grill pan or similar) or a baking tray on top. Or, if that's too much faff, buy this ready-made one instead.

LIGHT MY FIRE

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SMOULDERING

- 1 After lighting the barbecue, let flames die down otherwise you will burn the food. Aim for glowing embers, not a raging furnace.
- 2 Covering the barbecue raises the temperature and helps smoke the food-boosting tastiness. If you don't have a lid, marinate ingredients first to give them more flavour.
- 3 You will need tongs long enough to reach into the middle of the barbecue without your hand going over the heat. Similarly, the best skewers have long handles so they are easy to pick up.
- 4 As a health precaution, make sure chicken and pork are cooked thoroughly and raw meat doesn't come into contact with cooked.
- 5 Keep it simple: choose one or two ingredients and marinate any meat the night before. Remember that different meat requires different lengths of cooking, so the fewer the better.
- 6 One of the great advantages of barbecues is that side dishes and salads can be prepared in advance, thus enabling stress-free entertaining.
- 7 Delegate: cooking outside is a communal affair. Sausage monitors are particularly valuable.
- 8 Don't clean the barbecue after use. Fat on the grill prevents rust forming. Next time, wait until it's hot, then rub off.



COOK IT SLOW AND KEEP IT LOW

The US tradition of barbecuing is all about cooking meat for a long time in a closed kettle barbecue as the grill chef kicks back with a can of beer. This method of cooking renders meat tender, smoky and packed with fall-off-the-bone flavour. It's been adopted readily in London restaurants like Pitt Cue, which dishes up pulled pork and US-style sticky ribs. To learn more, watch barbecue chefs in action, and witness the King of the Grill competition, head to **Grillstock**, a festival of 'meat, music, mayhem' in Bristol, 11-12 July and in London, 5-6 September (www.grillstock.co.uk).

Couples are three times more likely to host a barbecue than single people

A WORD ABOUT CHARCOAL AND WOOD

The majority of the charcoal briquettes for sale in supermarkets and garages is imported with much of it produced from felled rainforest. To avoid this, look for Forest Stewardship Approved (FSA) charcoal or buy from local sources. Lump charcoal, superior to briquettes in terms of flavour and sustainability, can be ordered online from **Tregothnan** (www.tregothnan.co.uk), sustainably managed woodland in Kent, £8.95 for 3kg, and **Hampshire Coppice Craftsmen's Group** (www.hampshirecoppice.co.uk).

Wood is great if you have a handy supply – a summer woodburner surplus, perhaps. Big chunks burn slower than chips but hot smoked wood chips which come in a variety of flavours, including alder, ash, beech, cherry, chestnut, hickory, maple, manuka and oak, add flavour to smoked meat. **Hot Smoked** sells apple, beech and oak smoking woods, £3 for 300g. (www.hotsmoked.co.uk).

YOU MAY NEED...

- ☐ A fish slice or heatproof spatula
- ☐ A burger maker
- ☐ Oven gloves
- ☐ Apron
- ☐ A chopping board and a sharp knife
- ☐ A chimney starter
- ☐ Paper or melamine plates and cups
- ☐ A jug for drinks
- ☐ Tongs
- ☐ Salad bowl and servers
- ☐ Napkins
- ☐ A bottle opener
- ☐ Folding outdoor chairs
- ☐ Skewers

SOMETHING EXTRA

Make your barbecue sizzle with our selection of hot accessories



Barbecue tool set, £28.95

www.idyllhome.co.uk



Weber pizza stone, £40

www.johnlewis.com



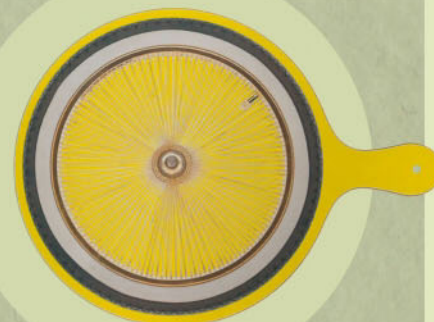
Fold-away floral chair, £34.95

www.joules.com



Sagaform glasses, £13.95 for four

www.scandinavianshop.co.uk



Wow wheel tray, £19.50

www.elladoran.co.uk



Popcorn pan, £19.99

www.glamcamping.com



Hamburger mould, £20

www.johnlewis.com



Tea cup ladies apron, £20

www.lushlampshades.co.uk

Going postal: Blair's collection of stamps is like a mini graphic design manual



THE COLLECTOR STAMPS

Words: JULIAN OWEN Portrait: JO THOMSON

NOT YOUR AVERAGE STAMP COLLECTOR, BLAIR THOMSON APPLIES A DESIGNER'S EYE TO THE HOBBY. HE IS RAISING THE PROFILE OF A PASTIME THAT'S NO LONGER THE PRESERVE OF OLD MEN

Every once in a while, Blair Thomson attends a gathering of the brethren. "The other guys are more or less old men. They've probably been doing it for ever," he says, admitting that other stamp collectors are "often quite baffled" by him. This should come as no surprise. It has been the lot of every revolutionary throughout history to "look a little bit out of place".

Because, reader, you should be in no doubt: Blair Thomson is not like other stamp collectors. He sounds fairly bemused as he recounts stories of more orthodox philatelists attending exhibitions alongside him "armed with a long list of high-value stamps, spending hundreds of pounds on things

they simply have to have, inspecting everything under a glass."

He is not scornful though, nor is he tearing up the rule book. He's simply writing another one. Think of him as Christian Dior with perforated edges. Before the designer's 1947 New Look collection, fashion was fussy and expensive, something for the wealthy few. He made it sleek, uncluttered and affordable. Democratised. So it is with stamps.

"I'm looking for interesting design in very small form, which people take for granted and ignore over time because it disappears out of circulation. It's about finding those gems and pulling them into one beautiful collection. They don't cost a lot, either."

The Simple Things wonders what might constitute a gem. "Lately I've been particularly keen on Venezuelan stamps. It's very hard to get detail on who did specific designs, but in the 1970s there were four guys appointed by the postal service: Gerd Leufert, Nedo Mion Ferrario, Alvaro Sotillo and Santiago Pol. They were making amazing modernist geometric patterns – people wouldn't have seen anything else like it at the time. Abstract, simple, communicating different ideas in stamp form."

If Blair's motivation for stamp collecting is unusual, its genesis was altogether more common. "When I was about seven or eight my dad gave me a Stanley Gibbons Strand World album, aimed at kids. You've basically got the whole world in a book and »



1. Centenary of the first telephone call, 1976
2. Venezuelan stamp marking the bicentenary of Royal Decree of Integration
3. A 1978 design from The Netherlands advertising the introduction of postal codes





2



3



4

just stick them in. We lived in Australia. It wasn't remote, but we lived in a couple of acres, didn't have lots of friends, and I spent a lot of time on my own. The ones with the simplest graphic form, very geometric, they're the ones that drew me. I also inherited my grandmother's collection, Penny Reds and stuff which are very old, but I confess they don't do a lot for me."

The stamps that most caught his eye came from Canada, the land of his birth. "The design I relate to most is the 1976 Montreal Olympics set. A real iconic thing that transcends time, beautifully simple. I'm still obsessed with its whole identity system."

It would be easy to assume Blair's aesthetic appreciation of stamps is lacking in romance, or a trifle cool. Easy, but mistaken. "Stamps were little tiny forms of escapism. All those exotic places you'd

never dream of going to, Asia or the Caribbean, through the imagery you could imagine stories of what goes on there. Each stamp felt like a cultural reflection of the country, where it's at in terms of its identity, how it presents itself internationally. For example, I've got some from Bangladesh and Afghanistan – you would think today they're very traditional, but the stamps are quite radical, almost like they're trying to communicate in a Western way."

Communication is Blair's *raison d'être*. It will not surprise you to learn that he grew up to become the creative director of a design and branding agency. Less, that he's on a mission to transform the image of his out-of-hours passion. "I would like to invigorate a bit of a resurgence in people taking it more seriously, from a design perspective, and influence other people to take it up as well," he says. His first move was 10

1. Commonwealth Day stamps from Australia, 1983
2. 'The Child and the Cube', issued to commemorate Dutch child welfare
3. South African stamp – 50 years of radio broadcasting
4. Arbor Day stamps from Israel



5



6



7



8



9

5. Marking the 1976 Montreal Olympics
 6. Butterfly stamps from New Zealand
 7. Polish stamp for the seventh International Poster Biennale in Warsaw
 8. UK decimalisation training stamps
 9. Hong Kong festivals, 1975

years ago, setting up a website, Graphilately, so named “because it combines ‘graphic’ and ‘philately’”.

“I’d stick the occasional stamp up, just to share it,” he recalls. “I was surprised by how many people responded favourably.” Even the “baffled” old school collectors. “They understand the hobby does kind of need its profile raising. I seem to have been accepted.”

[A quick aside. It struck *The Simple Things* too late to share in our original conversation, so we’ll do it now: Blair, we know you’re the branding ace and everything, but we have a suggestion: an advertising campaign based on reworking a Van Morrison classic, focusing on the earnestly sung tag line ‘Have you told philately that you love it?’]

Even without such help, things have begun to snowball. “I’ve had quite a bit of press interest,” he explains. “You guys, *The New Yorker* did a little

feature, and the US Postal Service contacted me last week about doing something.” Elsewhere, “a few designers have started making their own stamps, putting them out there as self-initiated projects. Those things all help perpetuate interest.”

Nothing, though, would be more welcome than a continuation of something happening on the continent. In recent decades, says Blair, stamp design has become a little too “flamboyant and detailed. But I’ve got some new stamps from France and Spain which look like they could have been released in the 1960s or 1970s.” The golden age. “It’s the use of space, the colour palette, working within the limitations of the era’s print process. Simple, graphic ideas conveyed through a highly visible, yet tiny medium. They feel timeless.” 

See more on instagram: @graphilately



POSTCARDS from the hedge

July



MARK DIACONO is a green-fingered foodie who grows, cooks and eats produce on his Devon smallholding. His latest book *The New Kitchen Garden* (Saltyard Books, £22) is available on a 'pay what you can afford' basis from www.otterfarm.co.uk.

High summer brings a fiesta of strong flavours and colours to the kitchen garden. And heralds the arrival of this year's piglets

OTHER THAN MOWING between avenues of vines, picking early Japanese plums, there's not much to do outside. Everything is growing well, weeds have slowed from their spring rush and the pace of life has eased off; there's time for enjoying the forest garden, the orchards, vineyard, perennial garden and veg patch.

It's a month for eating and cooking outside. At least one of the barbecue, pizza oven and firepit are fired up each day.

Cooking and eating outside means herbs, spices and edible flowers are easily to hand. As well as grabbing handfuls of mint for dressings, cocktails and salsas, there is coriander to be harvested as microleaves – sown thickly in trays and picked when just 10 days old, 5cm tall and at its most intense. Perilla (or shiso), its crinkly green or purple leaves tasting halfway between mint and cumin, is great for shredding and

adding depth on serving to fish, veg and meat. The flowers, sprinkled over a leafy or fruit salad are full of the same intense flavour, too.

Outside in the evening, there's likely to be wine and mayonnaise; the latter, enlivened with the herbs to hand. Shredded chives, perilla, Szechuan pepper leaves, apple mint and coriander are favourites, but for the hottest weather, salad burnet, with its cool cucumber-flavoured leaves takes some beating. Where salad burnet cools, nasturtium adds warmth. Cast into a salad, the young leaves add lively pepper and fresh green flavour, as do the older leaves at the base of a risotto.

If you're going to be out in the freezing wind pruning vines in December, turning over rain-heavy sheep to check their hooves, then these July days are the ones to be enjoyed; a counterbalance that puts fuel back in the tank.



Cool salad burnet, delicious in Pimms



Now's the time to gather green walnuts to pickle



Perilla will pep up meat or fish



Young coriander has an intense flavour



I'm making...

Salsa verde

This summer sauce is great with barbecued meat or fish or on a pizza. The core recipe can be made with a single herb or any mix – balance the flavours well and avoid rosemary and sage as they tend to dominate. If short of time you can use a blender but chopping by hand is altogether nicer.

Serves 4

1 garlic clove
small bunch of flat-leaf parsley (leaves only, no stalks)
small bunch of basil
slightly smaller bunch of mint (leaves only)
2 anchovies
2 tsp capers
1 tsp mustard
few drops of lemon juice
½ tsp sugar
2 tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

1 Roughly chop the garlic, then add the herbs and chop them all together until well combined. Add the anchovies and capers and continue until everything is finely chopped.

2 In a bowl, combine the mustard, lemon juice and sugar. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, then stir in the herby mix. Stir in the olive oil a little at a time, to obtain a thick, glossy consistency. Now's the time to taste it – and add a little of this or that until it's just as you want it.

Wish you were here...

- To pick green walnuts – nuts that have grown large but are still without a shell beneath the fleshy exterior – for pickling and making nocino, the rich, syrupy Italian aperitif.
- To be on hand for the birth of this year's piglets. Other than stay out of the way and move

any that the mother might roll onto, there's not much to do, but it's one of the highlights of the Otter Farm year.

- To make a three-cucumber Pimm's, with cucumber wedges, salad burnet leaves and borage flowers, all of which carry that unmistakable cool flavour.

HOME STYLE

THE THERMOS FLASK

Words: **CLARE GOGERTY**

Surely there is no better accessory to have when heading outdoors than the Thermos flask.

Tuck it into a glove compartment or a rucksack and it will be your best travelling companion, always there in readiness when a nice cup of tea is called for.

Whether you are setting off on a road trip with the intention of stopping somewhere scenic (but, more likely, ending up in a layby on an indifferent A-road), watching a football match, or simply going for a ramble, a Thermos makes the outdoors comfy. When showers are squally, winds are frisky and boots are leaky, there it is offering warmth and sustenance.

How clever then of Scottish scientist James Dewar to invent such an item. Granted, it was a byproduct of his some-would-say-more-important work in the field of cryogenics (the study of the behaviour of materials at low temperatures), but he surely must have foreseen its larger, domestic potential. Looking for a way to prevent cold liquids evaporating, he came up with a double-walled glass flask and partially removed the




“Your tea stays hot and cold drinks remain at their refreshing best”

air within, creating a vacuum. The liquid stays at the same temperature because there are no air molecules through which heat can transfer. So now you know why your tea stays hot and cold drinks remain at their refreshing best. (Why tea tastes a bit odd is another matter – that’s probably something to do with slapdash cleaning on your part, to be perfectly honest.)

The vacuum flask became a commercial concern in 1904 when German glassblowing company Burger and Aschenbrenner renamed it the Thermos (from *therme*, Greek for ‘hot’) and it went into mass production.

The arrival of the Thermos in American households coincided with the dawn of the automobile age, and this car-and-Thermos combo came to represent a new spirit of freedom and adventure,

reaching its zenith when Ernest Shackleton took one to the South Pole, and Amelia Earhart went airborne with hers. In Britain, it has become synonymous with outings big and small. Stop for a rest, unscrew the cup, pour your beverage of choice and it’s holiday time. 


PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

THE UPDATE




THE
CLASSIC

Stainless King 1.2 litre flask | £30.95

 The daddy of vacuum flasks. With this in your rucksack, you can conquer the universe. www.thermos.co.uk




World map flask and cup | £12.95

 Comes with a handy reminder of how just many countries you can take your flask to. www.dotcomgiftshop.com

TWO
GREAT
TWISTS



Elia vacuum coffee jug | £19.90

 Ideal for picnics, this baby will keep drinks hot (or cold) for 20 hours. www.kitchenscookshop.co.uk

THE STUFF OF LIFE

Welcome to *The Simple Things*' independent shop online

FULL OF

things to want and wish for
things to make life a bit nicer
things for inside the home and out

Pay us a visit

shop.thesimplethings.com



Our shopkeeper's picks for July...

“ Summer means eating alfresco. I love packing up a simple picnic to share. Individual **scalloped edged brown paper bags** from The Original Pop Up Shop are perfect for mini feasts. For gatherings at home I'm looking for some beautiful table linen. Classic **washed linen tablecloths, placemats and napkins** from The Linen Works are ideal for a relaxed setting. And handmade porcelain **Dimple Cups** by Linda Bloomfield are just the ticket for serving tea made with mint fresh from the garden. ” *Louise Gorrod, Shopkeeper*

Turn the page to see more of our wares... »

THE STUFF OF LIFE

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BLUE PATTERN PAPERS



Cambridge Imprint is a partnership of three sisters: a painter, a textile artist and a ceramicist. They design a range of paper, stationery, textiles and ceramics. Their fine matte pattern papers work for origami, bookbinding and all manner of other crafts, as well as wrapping.

Ten sheets of Cambridge Imprint Blue Pattern Papers, £20

TRAVEL POSTERS



Artist/illustrator Susie West has created a collection of framed prints celebrating the places we live or love to visit, with a nod to the nostalgic travel posters of the past. Susie also creates prints of houses, streets and shop-fronts which would make a thoughtful, individual gift.

Susie West travel posters, £40

ULTIMATE BELL TENT



This tent suits your every need, whether it's a glamping trip or simply a garden party. The 'Strawberries and Cream' stripes stand out from the crowd. But it's practical, too – the heavy duty canvas is rot and mould treated, the windows have mosquito nets and it has a zipped groundsheet.

Glam Camping Company Limited Edition Bell Tent, £510

OVERNIGHT BAG



Lou Hopper showcases talented designers, hand-making home furnishings, bags and clothing. This bag is ideal as hand luggage; its exterior pocket would keep passport and tickets handy. The inside is lined, with a useful zip pocket, and it has a detachable canvas shoulder strap.

Peppertree turquoise overnight bag, £85

DREAMKEEPER



Mosami's Dreamkeeper is inspired by the beautiful Buddhist prayer wheels that contain mantra scrolls. Write your dreams or aims onto the tiny paper scroll concealed inside Dreamkeeper and wear as a reminder to direct your daily journey towards your dreams.

Mosami Dreamkeeper, £90

EMILY PRINT KITCHEN ACCESSORIES



Ulster Weavers offer a unique range of quality textiles in quirky designs, kitchen co-ordinates and thoughtful gifts. This bright, cheerful Emily print was created to bring floral bouquets into the kitchen during summer and brighten up the dullest of winter days.

Ulster Weavers kitchen accessories, various prices

SELL YOUR WARES ON THE STUFF OF LIFE

If you'd like to be considered as a merchant, email thesimplethings@nowshop.com or call 0203 515 0052

MISCELLANY

★ JULY ★

A curious combination of the practical and the playful

Compiled by **FRANCES AMBLER** Illustrations by **JOE SNOW**



THIS MONTH

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CAPTION COMPETITION OVER TO YOU...

Brighten up our day with a cheeky caption for this delinquent kingfisher. We'll send a beautiful book to the writer of the one that makes us laugh hardest. Post your best efforts at www.facebook.com/thesimplethingsmag

HOW HARD CAN IT BE...

TO SEND A SMOKE SIGNAL?

Pow wow your survival
skills know-how



1 Find an open area, as high up as you can, to get your signal seen.

2 The average barbecue or campfire won't cut it for signalling needs. Build a fire with grass and greenery for a dense, white smoke.

3 Thoroughly soak a blanket with water before stretching it over the fire. With someone's help, hold it low enough to contain the smoke, but high enough not to burn. If alone in the wilderness, tie it to a tree instead.

4 Pull back one side of the

blanket quickly, before rapidly re-covering the fire: you want a puff of smoke, not a stream.

5 The meaning of the number of smoke signals varied between Native American tribes. Three is a standard alarm sign today.

6 No blanket? Three large, smoky bonfires – either in a triangle or as a line – is also a recognised distress signal.

FAB GADGET

A self-watering herb pot to keep your mint moist and your basil bathed.

Life Pod, £16.99, www.iwantoneofthose.com



LOST WORD

Celebrating lost gems from the
lexicon of yesteryear

Aquabib

noun, water drinker

"Pass the Pimm's? No thanks, I'm a dedicated aquabib."

Word rediscovered at The Phrontistery

www.phrontistery.info

MELAMINE PICNIC PLATES



PARADISE FIELDS PLATE

What's a British picnic without an abundance of pretty flowers?

BEST FOR: Those who like their picnicware (and bag and brolly) to match nicely.

£6, Cath Kidston

www.cathkidston.com



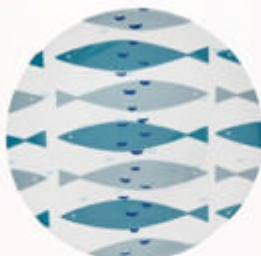
EXPLORE SIDE PLATE

The great outdoors gets a makeover in graphic lime green.

BEST FOR: Intrepid adventurers who like their home comforts.

£3, House by John Lewis

www.johnlewis.com



FISH DINNER PLATE

There's something charmingly coastal about this design.

BEST FOR: Seasiders who don't like getting sand in their sandwiches.

£3, Linea at House of Fraser

www.houseoffraser.co.uk

CARD SCHOOL

A race to shed your cards, also known as
Switch or Crazy Eights

BLACK JACK (BRIT STYLE)*

BASICS: 4-6 players; 52-card deck. Each player gets seven cards. Remaining cards are placed face down as stock with top card turned over as the starter. First player lays a card on the starter, which must match in either suit or rank, or draws a card from stock. The player continues laying cards in sequence until they can't go or they lay an action card. **ACTION CARDS:**
Two: next player picks up two cards, unless they can play a Two and make the next player pick up four.
Eight: next player misses turn. **Black Jack:** next player picks up five cards. A second Black Jack makes the next player pick up ten. **Red Jack** cancels. **Queen:** follow with a card of any suit.
King: reverses play order. The first person to shed all their cards wins. However, when a player can win on their next go, they must call 'last cards' or have to draw a card.
**It's different to the US gambling game 'Blackjack'.*

TASTY TREND

YUZU

An Asian citrus fruit that looks like a lemon/mandarin hybrid. It has a tart flavour and sweet aroma. Although packed with vitamin C, it's rarely eaten (and hard to get hold of) as a fruit; instead, its zest and juice are used in similar ways to a lemon, for both sweet and savoury dishes. Yuzu tastes pretty good in a cocktail, too.

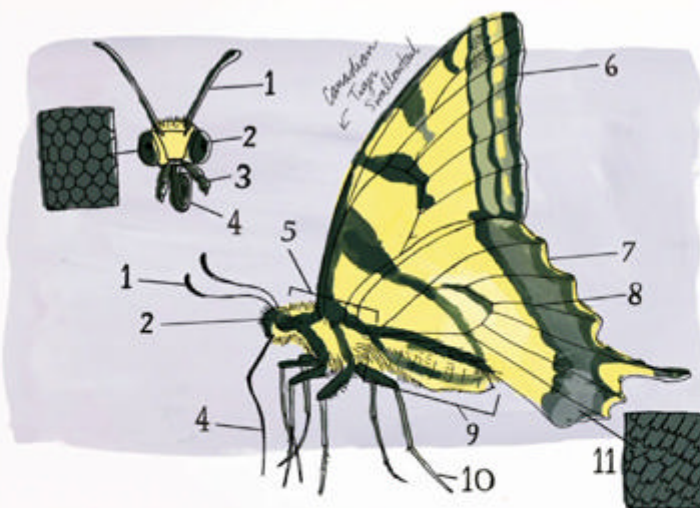
TRY IT: London's Flesh & Buns makes a tasty yuzu tart.

BUY IT: Sous Chef sells pure Yuzu juice, www.souschef.co.uk.

SEE IT: On our Tasty Trend Pinterest board.

NATURE ANATOMY

Because you never know when you'll need to be able to name the component parts of a butterfly



- 1 **ANTENNA** used for radar and pheromone detection
- 2 **COMPOUND EYE** has up to 1,700 individual ommatidia
- 3 **PALPUS** for scent-detecting
- 4 **PROBOSCIS** like a long straw for feeding and drinking
- 5 **THORAX** body segments that contain the flight muscles
- 6 **FOREWING**
- 7 **HINDWING**
- 8 **WING VEINS** vary between each genus of butterfly
- 9 **ABDOMEN** contains the digestive and respiratory systems, heart and sex organs
- 10 **LEGS** butterflies have three pairs except the Nymphalidae
- 11 **SCALES** on the wings

Taken from *Nature Anatomy* by Julia Rothman, Storey Publishing, £11.99

HOW TO...

PLAY CROQUET PROPERLY

To hold croquet court, first get to grips with the basic rules

YOU'LL NEED: two or four players: two players get two balls each, while four players get one. Traditionally blue and black balls play red and yellow.

TO PLAY: Strike your ball. Got it through a hoop? Congratulations, you've "run a hoop". You now get a "continuation stroke", ie another go. Hit someone else's ball? This is "roquet" and you need to take "croquet" (no, that's not a posh version of the hokey-cokey). To do this, place

your ball in contact with the roqueted ball. You must strike your ball with enough might to make the other ball move. You then get a continuation stroke. Done neither of the above? It's the end of your turn, sorry.

TO WIN: Get your ball(s) through all hoops in the right order, then hit the peg in the middle.

For a full set of 'simplified' rules, visit www.oxfordcroquet.com/coach/simplified.

Or try the easier 'Golf croquet' - www.croquet.org.uk/golf



When bringing large bunches of flowers into the house, put them into a deep bucket filled with cold water in a cool place for an hour or so to help the blooms last longer.

Taken from Women's Institute Practical Know-How: In The Kitchen (out of print)



DOGS IN BLANKETS

The secret dreams of sleeping pets

NEL, 18 MONTHS, LAKELAND TERRIER

"Here I am in my happy place. It's a magical dream world made just for me. A world where human owners stop putting on wellies and dragging me out into the cold. A world where the only blankets are crochet blankets; where the only food is sausages and toast (worth going onto your back legs for); where the only temperature is warm. It's Nel-World. I never want to leave."

Tweet a pic of your #dogsinblankets
@simplethingsmag

CURD SEARCH

A dairy-fuelled dawdle through the cheeses of the world



MOZZARELLA

Despite its familiarity on our pizzas, the origins of mozzarella are a mystery. A speciality of the area around Naples in Italy, its first cookbook appearance was in the 16th century, but it didn't receive its name until the 20th. It's "mozza" or "cut" because the curd is cut for shaping into its distinctive balls.

TASTING NOTES: Fresh cheese with a rubbery texture, a mild flavour and salty tang. Try in a Caprese salad with fresh tomatoes and basil.



HOW TO...

MAKE A PLANTER FROM AN OLD PALLET

Planting vertically to make the most of bare walls is a clever way to maximise space. However, creating these living tapestries means choosing plants that can cope with dry conditions and getting irrigation sorted. While there are clever readymade systems available at garden centres, you can make your own out of an old pallet with equally good results. This planter is ideal for salads, herbs or drought-tolerant plants like grasses and succulents.

- 1 Take a pallet and, on one side, remove two alternate planks of wood with a hammer, leaving the first in place at the 'bottom' of the pallet. You're looking to create three planting troughs with the planks of wood you're left with: one at the bottom, one in the middle and one at the top.
- 2 Line these three troughs with plastic (old compost bags are ideal). Use an upholstery staple gun to attach the plastic to the inside of the trough. Staple about 2cm from

- the top so when the trough is filled with soil, the plastic lining is covered.
- 3 Carefully pierce the bottom of the plastic liner to provide some drainage before filling with compost.
- 4 Choose a sunny spot and hang on a wall with appropriate attachments. Or you can lean it against a wall or shed but place at a bit of an angle to reduce the risk of toppling over.
- 5 Plant in situ, as you would if you were planting in a container, adding water-retaining granules. Water regularly.

GIVE IT A GROW

Plants that are (possibly) new to you

PASSION FLOWER



trouble-free climber with striking purple-fringed white flowers or, for something a bit more demure, go for the elegant pure-white blooms of 'Constance Elliott'.

WHY WOULDN'T YOU?

In colder areas, it needs a little protection in winter and ideally bringing in out of harsh weather. Or try mulching the base and wrapping in horticultural fleece.

WHAT IS IT?

A climbing vine with showy flowers that are followed by purple edible fruit. This exotic beauty does grow in our cooler climate with some sun and preferably a sheltered wall to help it get going. Happiest in well-drained soil, it copes in a container with a few handfuls of grit added.

WHY WOULD YOU?

It's fast-growing and evergreen: useful for disguising unsightly walls or fences. *Passiflora caerulea* is a

WHAT TO TRY...

John Vanderplank from www.passiflora-uk.co.uk holds the national collection and suggests growing *Passiflora edulis* (the edible kind) from seed. "Next spring, buy some passion fruits and keep about a third of the seeds. Give them a good wash before sowing 2-5mm deep in peat- or soil-based seed compost. Maintain a constant temperature of 26C/79F. Fresh seed should germinate in two to four weeks."



Scouring shelves for second-hand gems



BILLY BUNTER AT BUTLIN'S

It's hard to imagine a time when children's books were filled with tales centred around 'good grub and lots of it', but over-eating is what fat chump Billy Bunter does best. In this over-stuffed adventure, the schoolboy and his chums head to Butlin's holiday camp with a pocket full of ill-gotten cash. Japes and pranks ensue, mostly, in Bunter's case, involving the search for and consumption of ice cream, doughnuts and jammy treats. To be read greedily. Found in Oxfam, Great Malvern, Worcestershire



IDENTIFIER

BRITISH SHELLS

Be she that successfully spots seashells on the seashore with our Mi-shell-any guide



Common Tortoiseshell Limpet

Don't be fooled by the funny cone 'hat' – limpets aren't just clingy, their teeth are the strongest natural material known to human kind.



Queen Scallop

A fragile beauty, with regal appearance in shades of red, pink, brown, orange and purple. This monarch is frequently abolished for the purpose of eating.



Common Periwinkle

Takes on, and probably beats, Michael Fish in storm prediction stakes: find them high on the beach and it's a sign of bad weather to come.



Pelican's Foot

Once the ugly duckling, 18th-century conchologists cruelly called it 'blobber-lipped' – it's now a supermodel in the shell world.



The Knobbed Triton

The Loch Ness monster of shells: big, beautiful and rarely sighted. Like Nessie, it would be slightly difficult to ignore – at 22cm, it's quite a beast.



Humpback Scallop

Let this shell be a lesson to any slouching teenager – it's named because of how the shell distorts in order to fit in with its environment.



Northern Lucine

As commonly sighted at the British seaside as a stick of rock. Its concentric ridges mean it's probably as sturdy, too.



Common Cockle

You can see why this warms the heart: cook, pickle and eat the soft part or utilise the heart-shaped, ridged shell as a source of lime in building.



Common Otter Shell

As common as mud – and that's where this shell hangs out. Although less playful than its mammal counterpart, it's a rival in terms of glossy coating.

These illustrations are the work of George Sowerby, one of the most notable Victorian natural history illustrators. Hundreds more can be seen in *British Seashells: A Guide for Conchologists and Beachcombers* by Paul Chambers (Remember When, £25)

SIMON KING'S WILDLIFE RECIPE

Butterfly Sips

This simple energy-filled solution helps fuel butterflies, sadly in serious decline in much of the UK



INGREDIENTS

100g unrefined granulated sugar
900g water

METHOD

- 1 Boil the water in a saucepan.
- 2 Add the sugar.
- 3 Simmer until sugar is dissolved.
- 4 Allow to cool completely.

TO SERVE

You'll need a brightly coloured plastic plate (butterflies especially love red, yellow, blue and purple), string, any shallow plastic pot with a lip (small yogurt pots are ideal), a brightly coloured nylon dish

scrubber and some overripe fruit.

1 Cut a hole in the centre of the plastic plate to fit in the shallow plastic pot. The lip on the pot should prevent it sliding through.

2 Pierce the plastic plate in four evenly spaced points around its rim. Thread four 40cm pieces of string through these holes and tie knots on the underside to create a hanging platform.

3 Hang your feeding platform from a low branch or another horizontal fixing in a sunny spot, sheltered from the wind.

4 Stuff the nylon scrubbing pad into the yogurt pot so that it is level with or just below the top of the pot (cut the pad to fit if needs be).

5 Pour the sugar solution into the pot to a millimetre or so below the top of the scrubbing pad.

6 Slot the pot into the central hole in the plate.

7 Place small pieces of the fruit around the plate's periphery, cleaning the entire surface weekly.

www.simonkingwildlife.com



I USED TO KNOW THAT

Lessons from our school days, long since forgotten

LONGSHORE DRIFT

What's the fun of a visit to the seaside without reliving your Geography GCSE fieldwork? Longshore drift (also known as littoral drift, longshore current or longshore transport) describes the movement along the coastline of the material transported by waves.

Waves approach the beach at an angle dependent on the prevailing wind. The swash of the wave carries material up the beach at that same angle. However, gravity pulls the backwash – and the material it's carrying – back down the beach at a right angle. You're hopefully now recalling the diagram showing this zigzag swash and backwash. The beach is eroded when more material is carried away than supplied and groynes are often erected to help with this. By preventing the action of longshore drift, groynes stop material being carried away from a beach, with the added bonus of having a name that induces titters from many a young geographer. Seaside fun indeed.



SPINACH AND RICOTTA EMPANADILLAS

MAKES 30

FOR THE FILLING

- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 150g fresh spinach
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 20g grated parmesan
- 160g ricotta, drained
- ½ egg, beaten
- ½ tsp grated nutmeg

FOR THE PASTRY

- 125g plus 2 tbsp unsalted butter, chilled
- 225g plain flour, plus more for dusting
- 30ml cold water
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ egg, beaten

- 1 Heat the butter in a small pan with the spinach and a splash of water. Cover and steam for a few mins, then drain and finely chop. Transfer to a large bowl.
- 2 In the same pan, sauté the onion and garlic in the olive oil. Add to the spinach. Cool, then add the cheeses and beaten egg. Season with salt and nutmeg.
- 3 Cut the butter into small cubes. Put all the pastry ingredients, except the egg, in a food processor and blitz until it forms a dough. Add more water if needed. Wrap in clingfilm and chill for 30 mins.

- 4 Preheat the oven to 200C/ Fan 180/400F. Roll out the dough on a floured surface to 3mm thick. Use a cookie cutter to stamp out discs. Put a heaped teaspoon of filling in the middle of each.
- 5 Moisten the top half of the dough with a little water. Pull over the other half, squeezing out any air by pressing down on the edge of the dough with the tines of a fork or by folding and pinching the edges over.
- 6 Place the empanadillas on a baking sheet, brush with beaten egg and bake in the preheated oven for 15–20 mins, or until golden.

Recipe from *Party-Perfect Bites* by Milli Taylor, photography by Helen Cathcart (Ryland, Peters & Small, £16.99)



CAREFREE

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Linger on the beach with a picnic

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Making an outdoor oven

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ON SALE 29 JULY 2015

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SO MANY WAYS TO LIVE

A short story by **MELISSA HARRISON**



You've thought about leaving for a long time now. You're not unhappy – at least, no more than anyone else. It's mostly just habit; just something you do. You've always liked films about remote destinations, solo adventurers, cabins in the taiga; horizons have shimmered at the margins of your daydreams for as long as you can recall. You believe that despite your crowded life you would cope well with being alone.

It is a sop, you know that. You comfort yourself with the knowledge that you could just walk away if you chose to, so that staying becomes truly a choice. But during the last month or so it has become all-consuming, and you have dreamed every night – and in your waking life, too – of escape.

So now, as the train's wheels shudder under you and the city finally slips away, you close your eyes briefly and let out a long breath. Your bag is safely in the rack overhead, and already there is not a single person you can see who knows your name. None of them look at you, anyway, lost as they are in their iPhones and newspapers. It is as though you are invisible, as though you have already disappeared. You think: this is how it begins.



"Indulge yourself," reads an ad on the folded freesheet on the seat opposite; what is it selling, a food or a face cream? You think about how slippery and two-faced the word 'indulgence' is. At fourteen years old you found yourself shot through with sudden shame to find "self-indulgent" scrawled in red on an essay you'd loved writing. You'd had to look it up: 'Someone who gives themselves permission to indulge their desires.'

You'd wondered then, and you still wonder now, what is so very wrong with that.

You've always enjoyed journeys, the space between things, and you lean your head back and watch the trees and houses streaming past. Behind them distances are starting to open up: playing fields, wasteland, woods. You think about the town where the train terminates: what might be waiting there. Oh, there are infinite worlds out there, infinite choices: so many realities, each of them unique. So many ways to live.

There are fewer people on the train now; with each stop they thin out. You close your eyes and think: a busy terminus, another train. A market town somewhere; one you've never been before: its predictable high street and anonymous evening crowds. A pub for the evening, warm and loud; maybe a room above the bar for the night. Then a hire car, heading north. And then what? A horizon. You honestly don't know.


"Excuse me, is that your bag?"

You look up with a start. A teenage girl, hesitant, polite: she wants to fetch her jacket down from the rack.

"Yes. Sorry –" You stand, reach up and slide your bag aside. Thank God it's still there: it has everything you need in it. You see that the carriage is almost empty now, and you wonder if you dozed, and for how long. You wonder where the hell you are.

"Thanks."

"No problem," you say, and sit again. When she alights, you are entirely alone, your face a pale disc in the smudged window.

Dusk is falling, and the train speeds now between dark banks of vegetation. Briefly, a blackbird's evening song is brought in to the carriage and then snatched away. The train slows, and you gather yourself, and as you do your shoulders tauten; it is a moment of tiny, inward determination so automatic as to have become unconscious. And then, as the train shudders to a stop at the next station, you alight, and walk the last, habitual half-mile home. 

Melissa Harrison's simple thing is connecting with nature: planting things, listening to birdsong and walking her dog. Her novel *At Hawthorn Time* (Bloomsbury, £16.99) has a rural setting.

ILLUSTRATION: HANNAH WARREN



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